

FR. JOHN'S HOMILY

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, June 13, 2021

These past weeks we have been talking about the Mysteries of our Faith. Again Mysteries, not ones to be solved like a puzzle but ones for us to enter into and participate in. All because of God's love, not for anything we have done. This is why we call it grace - the Mystery of the Holy Trinity and the Mystery of Corpus Christi. God invites us into the loving relationship with Him and to nurture us into a deeper faith with Jesus as we partake in His Body and Blood. This all began for us at our Baptism. When out of love for us, God adopted us as His own and the seed of Faith was planted in our hearts.

Like any seed called to grow, so too is our faith. Our faith in God is like a seed that has to be nurtured in order to grow. A life of praying, reading of scriptures, studying our faith and the life of saints, regular confessions, and attending Mass -- all of these help our faith and our relationship with God grow. This is the vertical part of our relationship with God. When the vertical grows so do the horizontal relationships grow - our relationship with others.

The beauty of this Faith, our relationship with God, is that it too is a mystery. The more we nurture this relationship the more our love and understanding of God also grows. We must admit we need a mature faith, to handle the challenges of our time. There is a great deal of a lack of trust, in people, in government, in nations, in institutions, and yes, even in the church today. This causes many of us to be confused, frustrated, and searching for answers. So the question in these uncertain times is who you are going to trust? The best answer we know is God. Do we put our trust in God?

Before we look at our readings, I would like to remind us of a great way to understand the difference between faith and trust. A friend has been working on their talent of tightrope walking. He invites you to come watch him cross that great ravine. It's all set up, your friend turns to you and says "do you believe that I can walk across the tightrope to the other end and back". Before you answer, he says "watch". Your friend walks to one end and then back. He says, "Now do you believe?", and you say "Yes". Your friend then brings out a wheelbarrow. With the wheelbarrow, he walks to one side and back to the other. "Now do you trust me? If yes, then get in the wheelbarrow." That is the difference of faith and trust. God is asking us to get in, and trust Him, as our friend.

Hopefully our readings today can help us have greater trust in God. Looking at the Prophet Ezekiel today, he was one who lived in very uncertain times and even dark times. Ezekiel was of the priestly class that was sent into exile in Babylon. It was there while in Babylon, Ezekiel received his call to be messenger of God. It was a very difficult challenge to be God's messenger in those dark times, however Ezekiel had to answer God, and he said yes. In his own way he had to answer God, "Ezekiel. do you trust me?". Remember he was living in the same dark times as his people.

He did answer yes and he began to proclaim God's word to the people of Israel. If he didn't have trust in God, how could he invite the people of Israel to have trust in God? Remember the people of Israel had lost everything. Everything that was dear to them was now gone: their home, some

lost family members, some families were left behind, their temple destroyed, and their nation as they knew it was now gone. What hope for the future did they have? Under these circumstances, Ezekiel proclaimed God words of hope and comfort.

When Ezekiel proclaimed God was taking the crest of the cedar and replanted it on top of the Mountain, the people of Israel knew that he was referring to them, their leadership and future of the House of David. The cedar will now be majestic, and the birds of every kind shall dwell beneath it. Every winged thing will enjoy its shade. In the end, it will be God and God alone, and His people, his nation, his kingdom that will remain. There will be no other. All other nations must answer to God, they are the ones who will sit in the shade of God's tree. So the people of God were called to put their trust in God, and in His time He would restore His people. And not only restore but it would be better than in the past. In the end there is only one to trust, that is God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Just like Ezekiel giving hope to his people, we are called to do the same. But before we can call others to have trust in God, do I? Do you? Trust God. Remember in the end, it is God and God alone who will remain, forever and for all eternity. The world as we know is passing away, only God remains.

Jesus calls us to this trust. Again in order to call someone to trust in God, that person has to have trust in God himself. Jesus had complete trust in His Father, in His love and in His reign. How often will Jesus, say and show, not my will be done but your will be done? Often Jesus put His trust in the Father and calls us to do the same.

Listen to what he says about the Mysteries of His Father's kingdom. It is like a seed planted in the ground, the farmer doesn't know how, but the seed breaks into the sprout, then grows into the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. Then it is time for the harvest. All this happens with very little help from the farmer. The kingdom of God grows like these seeds in the ground, or we should say, seed of faith in our hearts.

Again, the kingdom of God is like the mustard seed. It is the smallest of seeds, yet it grows and the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade. These parables are about God's reign, which is a mystery, one we can participate in and one we are called to have complete trust in. Because in the end, it is God and God alone. There will be no other kingdom left standing. Do I trust in God?

As we receive Jesus, let Him teach us to Trust in God and in His kingdom. We even pray His Kingdom come, thy will be done in the Our Father. God needs Ezekiel's today to be his messengers of Hope and Trust. Jesus needs us to be trusting disciples. Like the disciple who said, "Yes Lord, I believe, help me in my unbelief." We say today, Lord, I trust in you, help me in my lack of trust. Jesus I trust in you.