

Today's Readings
27th Sunday of Ordinary Time
The Importance of Believing and Handing on the Faith

The central theme of today's readings has to do with *faith*: trusting faith in God, trusting faith in Jesus Christ. The first reading is taken from the prophet Habakkuk, who was writing at a time when the world in which he was living was filled with violence. Sound familiar? Habakkuk cries out to God: I cry out to you, "violence" but you [God] do not intervene. Why don't you do something about the violence that is destroying our world? Where are you God? Sound familiar? But God's response to the Habakkuk is simple: My promise will come to its fulfillment. I will respond to your needs in my time, not your time. Wait for the fulfillment of my promise even if it seems late in arriving; *for the just one, because of his faith, will live.*

God tells Habakkuk and us, live in trusting faith that the promise will be fulfilled. It may not be fulfilled in the way we want or think it should. But it will be fulfilled. So live in trusting faith that God will fulfill the promise of peace and justice he has made in Jesus Christ.

In today's gospel the disciples ask Jesus to increase their faith, and Jesus responds that if they had faith the size of a mustard seed (the smallest of all seeds) they would be able to do all things. In other words, it is not the amount or the size of our faith that matters. What matters is whether or not we have faith. Faith is the starting point, and if we have even the smallest amount of faith, all things are possible.

The faith that Jesus talks about is faith that trusts in the goodness, mercy and generosity of God the Father. If we trust and rely on God's goodness and mercy, all things are possible. If we insist on relying simply on ourselves, we will be disappointed. This is why the prophet Habakkuk says the just person will live because of his/her faith. It is faith that gives life and dynamism to our life. It is faith and trust in God that makes all things possible.

Finally, today's second reading is taken from St. Paul's second letter to Timothy. Paul's writes this letter from prison, aware that he is about to be put to death. But before he dies, Paul provides for the future by exhorting Timothy to hand on the faith he has received from him to the next generation. Timothy is to stir into a flame the gift that has been given to him. He is to bear his share of the hardship that preaching the gospel entails. He is to hand on the faith that Paul has handed on to him to the next generation.

Faith makes all of the difference in our lives. If we believe, then we understand. If we believe, then we see. If we believe, then we live our lives in an entirely new ways that St. Paul calls "newness of life." If we believe, then we live by the power of God's Spirit that dwells in us, and all things are possible.

But faith has to be handed on from generation to generation. It is not enough to believe, we must hand on our faith to the next generation just as the previous generation handed on the gift of faith to us. Christian faith is handed on from generation to generation to generation. But if we do not do our part, then the chain of faith will be broken, and the next generation will no longer know how and what to believe.

Father Matera