

Lent 1C 2016

Renewing our Faith

At the beginning of this Lent, the church focuses our attention on a single theme: our need for faith. For example, in today's first reading, we heard a summary of the faith that Israel recited each year: "My father (Abraham) was a wandering Aramaean who went down to Egypt... and you Lord brought us out of Egypt with a strong outstretched arm." In today's second reading, St. Paul summarizes our Christian faith: "if we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in our heart that God raised him from dead, we will be saved." Finally in today's gospel, Jesus provides us with an example of trusting faith in God.

When Satan challenges him to turn stone into bread Jesus shows his trusting faith by responding that he does not live by bread alone. *When Satan* promises to give Jesus all the power and glory of the world, Jesus shows his trusting faith by affirming that he worships God alone. And *when Satan* challenges Jesus to force God to save him, Jesus shows his trusting faith by refusing to test God. Jesus shows that he is the obedient Son of God who trusts in the power of God to save him. And by this faith he overcomes the power of Satan,

The church focuses our attention on the centrality of faith at the beginning of Lent because without faith we can nothing. *Without faith*, we cannot know God. *Without faith*, we cannot live the Christian life. *Without faith* we cannot complete

our Lenten journey. *It is faith* that enables to walk without sight. *It is faith* that enables us to finish the race. *It is faith* that empowers us to do what seems impossible. Faith is the power that makes our lives different.

There are times, however, when our faith falters and grows weak. *Faith grows weak* when we take it for granted. *Faith grows weak* when we do not practice it. *Faith grows weak* when we withdraw from the community of believers. *Faith grows weak* when we want to be like everybody else. *Faith grows weak* when we conform ourselves to the world rather than to Christ. *Faith grows weak* when we no longer listen to the Word of God with an open heart.

This is why Lent is so important. This is why we must apply ourselves to the discipline of Lent. *Lent is our moment* of training and renewal in the Christian life as we prepare to celebrate the Paschal Mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. *Lent is our moment* to grow in faith and strengthen our faith through prayer, almsgiving, and fasting. But if we do not take advantage of this moment when it comes, if we do not live these days of fasting and prayer, we will have missed an important moment to grow in faith and live in Christ.

As we begin this Lenten Season, let us resolve to make this Lent different. Let us resolve to grow in faith as a community of faith so that we can celebrate the Lord's death and resurrection in the fullness of faith.