

The just one, because of his faith, shall live! (27th-Respect Life Sunday)

What would you do when the Lord delays in responding? In today's Gospel, Jesus challenges his disciples and us to have unshakable Faith in him so that God can work miracles in our lives.

St. Aquinas once said: *"To the one who has Faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without Faith, no explanation is useful."* Today's all three readings speak a lot about "Faith" and how it works in our lives. *Faith* as a theological - infused virtue, enables us to believe something to be true and therefore worthy of trust, simply because it has been revealed to us by God. *In short, Faith is our response to God's call, to God's love.*

Our first reading presents Faith as trusting in God and faithfully living out His Covenant with us. Here, Faith is shown as *steadfast expectation* in the face of suffering and delay. Prophet Habakkuk, who cries, *"O Lord, I cry for help and you don't listen"* - represents the typical human existential situation that you pass through in your life.

In our second reading, Paul tells Timothy that Faith operates as a believing, trusting, and loving relationship with Christ. He stresses the need for a living Faith in Christ, and loyalty to his teachings handed down to us by the Church

And in today's *Gospel*, while the Apostles ask, "Lord, increase our Faith" and Jesus reminds them, that the *quality of one's Faith is more important than the quantity*. A small amount of deep Faith can accomplish great things if that small amount of Faith is placed in a great, mighty, and all-powerful God. Jesus also teaches us, that for **Faith to be effective, it must be linked with trust, obedience and total commitment**: -an active submission to God, with a willingness to do whatever He commands.

Jesus is teaching his Apostles that **Faith is sharing in God's power**. It is that trust in *God- God in action*, expressed by steadfast loyalty, fidelity and total commitment to Him even in small quantities; it allows God to work miracles

in our lives and in the lives of others. It is Faith, which makes a person just, putting him into right relation with God and neighbor.

As we celebrate today Respect Life Sunday, I want to connect you with today's readings to the theme.

Faith is a vital gift from God that provides hope and strength in life's struggles, urging us to respect the sanctity of life and trust in His divine plan. Respect Life Sunday emphasizes gratitude for the gift of life, highlighting the tragic societal mindset that views the unborn as disposable, undermining the sanctity of all human life. This is just the opposite of what the church teaches us, children as the sublime gift of married life/love.

The killing of over 1 million unborn child every year is an incomprehensible tragedy, that our society sees the unborn child as something to be eliminated. The unavoidable consequence of this, is the disregard for the sanctity and dignity of every human person. The increase of violence in our society, and the growing disregard and disrespect for one-another. In the light of all these, it is easy for you to lose faith. As our 1st reading reminds us of our contemporary world, of continued violence, intolerance, division and destruction, like Prof. Habakkuk we ask, 'Lord why don't you intervene?'

Scripture answers: 'if God delays, wait for Him, the just one shall live, because of his faith'. And for that end, Paul is lovingly inviting us to '*stir into flame, faith-the gift of God, that we have received*' through the imposition of hands. For, God has not given us, a spirit of cowardice/fear, but rather, a spirit of power, love and self-control'

B&S, in our life, as we live and act in faith, today and everyday, we need to pray like the Apostles= "Lord, increase my faith", and ask Him, 'grant me the grace to stir into flame the gift of my faith, the spirit not of fear, but of power, of love and self-control'. Amen

Story:

(In June of 1859, Charles Blondin, the French tightrope walker became world-famous, when he walked on a tightrope, stretched over quarter of a mile across the mighty Niagara Falls. He became the first person to accomplish this amazing challenge. He walked across 160 feet above the waterfalls several times, each time with a different daring way - once in a sack, on a bicycle, in the dark, and once even carrying a stove and cooking an omelet! A large crowd gathered in excitement, ran along both sides of the falls. The crowd applauded as Blondin carefully walked across one dangerous step after another - blindfolded and pushing a wheelbarrow.

Upon reaching the other side, the crowd's applause was louder than the roar of the falls! Blondin suddenly stopped and addressed his audience: "Do you believe I can carry a person across in this wheelbarrow?" The crowd enthusiastically shouted, "Yes, yes. You are the greatest tightrope walker in the world. You can do anything!" "Okay," said Blondin, "then, please get in the wheelbarrow", but truly, no one did, although all had faith in his ability!)