

29th Sunday in OT_C

October 19, 2025

St. Edward's Parish

Friend, for the past two weeks our Sunday homilies have reflected on faith. First, we considered what faith is, namely, a supernatural gift from God that enables us to trust Him and believe all that He has revealed. Then, last week, we considered the power of faith. We noted that although faith indeed has the power to work miracles, the greatest power of faith is the salvation of our souls by the forgiveness of our sins, making us sons and daughters of God, and bringing us to eternal life. Today we turn to the final topic in this series on faith: how to obtain and preserve this gift of faith.

The Gospel today encourages perseverance in faith and prayer. We have likely all had the experience of turning to God for help in some need and wondering if He will ever answer. In view of this, Our Lord tells a parable of a widow who demands justice from an uncaring judge. The judge refuses but eventually he gives in because she is wearing him out. The point here is not that we must wear God out by continually badgering Him. Rather, the point is that if even an unjust judge will give this woman what she needs, how much more will God, who is a loving Father, answer our needs if we remain patient and trusting. Our Lord then concludes with a startling question, "And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" He suggests that it is entirely possible for us to lose our faith. We have seen this throughout history and even our own times. If we are not careful, the Catholic faith

can dry up in our families, our communities, and even whole countries. How then do we receive this precious gift of faith and preserve it?

Let us remember what faith is: a supernatural gift that enable us to trust God and believe all He has revealed. There are two dimensions here: a) the things God has revealed and b) our acceptance of them. Regarding the first, to believe in God and what He has revealed we must know what He has revealed. This means we must have an accurate and clear exposure to the life of Jesus and the truths of faith. St. Paul writes to the Romans: “Faith comes from what is heard” (Rom 10:17). It is necessary to hear or read the scriptures (e.g. reading the New Testament). It can be helpful to have a Bible with good explanations (e.g. the Ignatius Catholic Study Bible). We must also know clearly what the Catholic Church has handed on about faith in Jesus. A copy of the Catechism is helpful here. You can also make use of good online resources such as Formed.org, or parish faith formation programs. We must have an accurate awareness of what God has revealed before we can believe it.

Second, is our personal assent; our ‘yes’. It is one thing to read or hear about the faith, but how do we say ‘yes’ with our heart and mind? There are two aspects to this. On the one hand, we can seek convincing external proofs, for example, the power of faith in the lives of the saints, the miracles in the Church, how Jesus fulfills the Old Testament prophecies, how the teachings of the Catholic faith fit together etc... These

are all things that can convince us to say 'yes'. They demonstrate that faith in Jesus makes sense. However, more is needed than this.

Two people can learn the faith or read the Scriptures, yet one may believe while the other does not. Therefore, we need an interior help. This is the work of the Holy Spirit within us to move our minds and hearts to say 'yes' to what God has revealed. Faith is a supernatural gift. One thing we can do is pray for the gift of faith. Remember the apostles begged Jesus, "increase our faith!" (Lk 17:5). We must come like poor beggars before God and humbly ask for the daily faith we need. It is helpful to remember that we cannot make someone else have faith. We can propose the faith to them, but they must want to receive it as a gift from God. Another thing we can do is to remove the interior obstacles to receiving God's grace, namely, our sins. One of the major obstacles to true living faith is unconfessed sin. If a jar is full of sand, it cannot be filled with gold. If our soul is blocked with unconfessed sin, it must be emptied out before the gift of God's grace can enter. I have often observed how the sacrament of Confession has the effect of reawakening faith when it begins to grow cold.

These are just a few suggestions to receive and preserve the gift of faith. There is much more we could say, however, this is a good start. Let's us pray this week that God may increase in all of us the gift of faith and let us do our part to learn it well and make our hearts ready to receive such a great gift.