

27th Sunday in OT_C

October 5, 2025

St. Edward's Parish

Friends, for a long time I have been fascinated by the gift of faith. When I was in my early 20s, I

experienced a profound deepening of my faith that radically reoriented my life. Over the years, I have often marvelled at the gift of faith in others and sought to understand this mysterious reality. What precisely is faith? What happens within us when we have faith? Why do some seem to have it and others not? The Gospel today brought these questions back to my mind. The disciples beg the Lord: "Increase our faith" and Jesus tells them that even faith the size of a mustard seed can accomplish impossible things. As I looked ahead at the next two weeks, I noticed that those Gospel readings also touch on faith. Therefore, I plan to take the next three weeks to preach on faith. First, what is faith? Second, on the power of faith. Third, on how we obtain and increase it. Let's begin with what is faith.

Throughout the Gospels, faith is one of the key aspects to following Jesus. Just looking at the Gospel of Luke we see that when Jesus heals someone he often says, "Your faith has saved you (or made you well)." He says the same to a woman whose sins are forgiven (Lk 7:50). When the disciples are terrified in a storm at sea, He asks, "Where is your faith?" (Lk 8:25). When He teaches the disciples not to worry about what they eat or wear He says, "O you of little faith" (Lk 12:28). At the last supper He says to Peter: "I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail" (Lk 22:32). Looking at these passages together, we see that faith in the Gospels has to do with a complete trust in Jesus and an acceptance of all He says. The Catechism describes faith as "trusting in God and cleaving to the truths He has revealed" (CCC 154). Faith is not simply believing a collection of ideas; rather it is a total act of trust in God and believing everything He has revealed, particularly in His Son Jesus Christ.

An excellent analogy for this act of faith is trusting and believing another person; something we are familiar with. For example, when a young man becomes interested in a woman. He can know some things about her by seeing her: for example, what she looks like or where she works. However, if he wishes to know what she is really like, she will have to reveal this to him. When she speaks, she may reveal the mystery of who she is on the inside: what her thoughts are, her hopes, her concerns. When

she reveals herself, he must decide if he trusts that what she says is true. He may not be able to prove her inner thoughts scientifically, but He can trust and believe her. That act of trust is very much like faith. When God reveals Himself in the Scriptures and in Jesus Christ, faith is that act of trust when we come to believe that what He says is true. The young man may trust the woman so deeply that he is willing to entrust his life to her in marriage. So, with God, we can have such a trust that we bet our whole life on Him.

Faith, however, goes deeper than trusting another person. Faith involves a conviction of things that we cannot see (see Heb 11:1) such as God's love, heaven and hell, the resurrection of the body, the power of the sacraments, the forgiveness of sins, etc.; therefore, God also grants us the interior help of the Holy Spirit to make that act of faith and trust. This is why we call faith a gift from God. The Holy Spirit works within us to move our mind and heart to see the truth clearly and accept it.

Faith is not believing any foolish spiritual thing; nor is it not being gullible or naïve. It means coming to a firm conviction in what God has revealed in Jesus Christ. These beliefs are clarified and handed down most perfectly in the Catholic Church. If we look carefully, God provides many ways to assure us that this faith is reasonable. We see things like the miracles of Christ and the Saints that continue even today (e.g. eucharistic miracles), the stability of the Catholic Church through so many centuries and trials, the example of people who are changed by faith (e.g. saints), the prophecies of the Scriptures that were fulfilled, etc. These are all things that we call "motives of Credibility" or reasons to believe (CCC 156). They show that faith is not just a blind leap, but it makes sense.

This is faith in a nutshell: a supernatural gift from God that enables us to trust Him and believe all that He has revealed in Jesus Christ and handed on through the Catholic Church. In the Gospel today, Jesus said that faith the size of a mustard seed can accomplish what seems impossible. Next week, therefore, we will contemplate the power of faith and its effects in our lives.