

Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Faith matters.

Habakkuk, a minor prophet who lived and prophesied around 600 BC, before the Babylonian exile, was complaining to God about the lack of action for not protecting the people from the ongoing foreign oppression. The invasion and oppression were a result of the disobedience of the chosen people. They were subjected to chastising by people worse than themselves. Habakkuk was upset that salvation was too far.

The final part of the prophecy is an assurance and a call to wait patiently for the appointed time. And the reading concludes with a warning and a promise, “The rash one has no integrity; but the just one, because of his faith, shall live.”

We must remind ourselves time and again of the promise:
“Because of faith, we shall live.”

Timothy was a dear disciple of Paul, and the first bishop of Ephesus, appointed and ordained by the imposition of Paul’s hands. What we have read today is part of Paul’s farewell message to Timothy. We heard thus, “Beloved: I remind you, to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands.”

Remember, Paul wrote it from prison, awaiting the death penalty for preaching the gospel. And he had one demand for Timothy, “Stir into flame the gift of God.”

Paul is asking Timothy, and all of us, to fan the flame of Faith, the rich trust we have received out of grace.

Christian Faith is trusting in God unconditionally, working towards the fulfillment of His promises unceasingly, and lovingly waiting for His glorious second coming.

Jesus was delivering this mystery through the parable of the master and the servant. The servant returns after a long day, yet the master, who appears to be unkind, asks him to serve the master at the table before anything else.

God does not owe us anything because we are Christians. He does not need our service. We are glorified in serving God. It is a matter of eternal joy to be a servant of Jesus.

The Psalmist had it in mind while singing:

“I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
than dwell in the tents of the wicked.” (Psalm 84:10)

In short, the church lovingly teaches us to be bold in our faith and to keep the flame of faith growing every passing day. Because it is better to be a servant at His table than to be a slave to the world.

There is a bonus: Jesus loves us to be at His table as His friends, not as mere servants.

“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.” (Jn 15:15).

Carefully nurture faith, praying along with the disciples, “Lord, increase our faith.”

Amen.