

“Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen.” Words from our 2nd reading today from the 11th chapter of the letter to the Hebrews – sisters and brothers, may the Lord give to you his peace & his joy.

A sick man turned to his doctor, as he was preparing to leave the examination room and said, “Doctor, I am afraid to die. Tell me, what lies on the other side?” Very quietly the Doctor said, “I don't know.” “You don't know? You, a Christian man, do not know what is on the other side?” The doctor was holding the handle of the door; on the other side of which came a sound of scratching and whining. As he opened the door a dog sprang into the room and leaped on the doctor with an eager show of gladness. Turning to the patient, the doctor said, “Did you notice my faithful dog? He's never been in this room before. He didn't know what was inside. He knew nothing except that his master was here, and when the door opened he sprang in without fear. I know little of what is on the other side of death, but I know one thing: I know my Master is there, and that is enough. When that door opens, I will pass through it with gladness, and with no fear.” To rest assured that everything is taken care of like that, to need nothing or no one else; this is what it means to have faith.

It is this faith that allowed Abraham to embark on the adventure of a lifetime though he was already an old man. He had no idea where he was going or where he'd end up; he didn't know how God would make of him a father of many nations with offspring as numerous as the stars in the sky or the sands on the seashore; he struggled to understand what God had in store for his beloved son Isaac upon that mountain, but he knew his Lord and Master was there leading him. Such faith was enough for him.

It is this faith in which Sarah could overcome her frustrations, for she had thought herself degenerate and barren; she was angry with her servants and jealous of others' good fortune. After a long life of bitterness, she came to trust in the promise of her God, and thus came to know laughter and joy once again. Such faith was enough for her.

It is this faith that gave hope to the Israelites through many years of suffering: as they toiled as slaves under the Egyptians for generations; as they were helplessly pursued by their enemies with no defense of their own; as they wandered lost in the desert for many years; as they knew physical hunger and thirst... complaining about their present lot was the only way they knew how to pray, but in faith they knew that God would hear the cry of their sufferings and allow them to literally pass over it all. And so they celebrate the feast of Passover time and again, giving thanks that their faith in a compassionate God was not misplaced. Such faith was enough for them.

It is this faith that kept the good servant in the Gospel vigilant for his master's return. Believing his master to treat him and his fellow servants well, he lived in peace with his co-workers; trusting that he was provided for, the servant did not need to help himself to food or drink that was not his own; he loyally kept watch over the house while his master was away lest it be broken into by a thief. It was faithfulness, and faithfulness in his master alone, that made for his promotion to chief steward of all his Lord's property. Such faith was enough for him.

It is this faith that has been passed from Abraham and Sarah to the Israelites, from the many great holy men and women throughout the ages that now has been handed on to us. It is this faith in God that keeps us going today. I have no magical solution to the problems we face in our country and in our world. I don't know what's going to happen to our Church in the months ahead. When we confront child abuse and painful church history, when we witness recurring mass shootings, when we palpably feel incredible divisions and racism and exclusion in our communities, when we are overwhelmed by a fast-paced world filled with unreasonable expectations, when we struggle through work and addictions and family strife and culture shock and uncertainty, when we see the absurdities of life and have nowhere, nowhere else to turn in this secular world, it is this faith that allows us to hear the Lord's encouragement: "do not be afraid any longer little flock." Faith is the substance of things hoped for: we know that there is something better out there. By faith, we know peace in our hearts, the graces that come from God's reign, that come from his Kingdom where true treasure is found. In faith we see the blessings of God unfolding around us. Such is the evidence of things not seen, not found in this world. And that is why - difficult as it may be - much is demanded of us, for we have been entrusted with much, this precious gift of faith. Nowhere in human history was life full of rainbows and unicorns. Every age has faced its own unique hardships, scandals, and sufferings, and yet it was faith that got them through. Knowing God was there was enough. For millennia, faith has allowed the human race to scan the horizon without fear and to welcome the presence of God in their lives with great eagerness, much like our beloved dog friend that was faithful to his owner, the doctor. As I live this life and together walk this earth with you, in faith I tell you that God is with us and that such faith is enough.

Readings: <http://uscgb.org/bible/readings/081119.cfm>

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 117

Reading 1 [WIS 18:6-9](#)

The night of the passover was known beforehand to our fathers,
that, with sure knowledge of the oaths in which they put their faith,
they might have courage.

Your people awaited the salvation of the just
and the destruction of their foes.

For when you punished our adversaries,
in this you glorified us whom you had summoned.

For in secret the holy children of the good were offering sacrifice
and putting into effect with one accord the divine institution.

Responsorial Psalm [PS 33:1, 12, 18-19, 20-22](#)

R. (12b) Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own. B

Exult, you just, in the LORD;
praise from the upright is fitting.

Blessed the nation whose God is the LORD,
the people he has chosen for his own inheritance.

R. Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

See, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him,
upon those who hope for his kindness,

To deliver them from death
and preserve them in spite of famine.

R. Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

Our soul waits for the LORD,
who is our help and our shield.

May your kindness, O LORD, be upon us
who have put our hope in you.

R. Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

Reading 2 [HEB 11:1-2, 8-19](#)

Brothers and sisters:

Faith is the realization of what is hoped for
and evidence of things not seen.

Because of it the ancients were well attested.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place
that he was to receive as an inheritance;

he went out, not knowing where he was to go.

By faith he sojourned in the promised land as in a foreign country,
dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the same promise;

for he was looking forward to the city with foundations,
whose architect and maker is God.

By faith he received power to generate,
even though he was past the normal age

—and Sarah herself was sterile—
for he thought that the one who had made the promise was
trustworthy.
So it was that there came forth from one man,
himself as good as dead,
descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky
and as countless as the sands on the seashore.

All these died in faith.
They did not receive what had been promised
but saw it and greeted it from afar
and acknowledged themselves to be strangers and aliens on earth,
for those who speak thus show that they are seeking a homeland.
If they had been thinking of the land from which they had come,
they would have had opportunity to return.
But now they desire a better homeland, a heavenly one.
Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God,
for he has prepared a city for them.

By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac,
and he who had received the promises was ready to offer his only son,
of whom it was said,
“Through Isaac descendants shall bear your name.”
He reasoned that God was able to raise even from the dead,
and he received Isaac back as a symbol.

Or[HEB 11:1-2, 8-12](#)

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Alleluia[MT 24:42A, 44](#)

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Stay awake and be ready!

For you do not know on what day your Lord will come.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel[LK 12:32-48](#)

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Do not be afraid any longer, little flock,
for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom.
Sell your belongings and give alms.
Provide money bags for yourselves that do not wear out,
an inexhaustible treasure in heaven
that no thief can reach nor moth destroy.
For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.

“Gird your loins and light your lamps
and be like servants who await their master’s return from a wedding,
ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks.
Blessed are those servants
whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival.
Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself,
have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them.
And should he come in the second or third watch
and find them prepared in this way,
blessed are those servants.
Be sure of this:
if the master of the house had known the hour
when the thief was coming,
he would not have let his house be broken into.
You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect,
the Son of Man will come.”

Then Peter said,
“Lord, is this parable meant for us or for everyone?”
And the Lord replied,
“Who, then, is the faithful and prudent steward
whom the master will put in charge of his servants
to distribute the food allowance at the proper time?
Blessed is that servant whom his master on arrival finds doing so.
Truly, I say to you, the master will put the servant
in charge of all his property.
But if that servant says to himself,
‘My master is delayed in coming,’
and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants,
to eat and drink and get drunk,
then that servant’s master will come
on an unexpected day and at an unknown hour
and will punish the servant severely
and assign him a place with the unfaithful.
That servant who knew his master’s will
but did not make preparations nor act in accord with his will

shall be beaten severely;
and the servant who was ignorant of his master's will
but acted in a way deserving of a severe beating
shall be beaten only lightly.
Much will be required of the person entrusted with much,
and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.”

Or [LK 12:35-40](#)

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