

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
OCTOBER 2, 2016

ENCOUNTERING CHRIST'S WORD



Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Luke 17:5-10

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."
The Lord replied, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed,
you would say to (this) mulberry tree, '
Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

Who among you would say to your servant who has just come in
from plowing or tending sheep in the field,
'Come here immediately and take your place at table'?

Would he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat.
Put on your apron and wait on me while I eat and drink.
You may eat and drink when I am finished'?

Is he grateful to that servant because he did what was commanded?
So should it be with you. When you have done all you have been
commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants;
we have done what we were obliged to do.'"

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BACKGROUND ON THE GOSPEL READING

In today's Gospel we hear Jesus teach about *faith and service* to God. The context is a continuing dialogue between Jesus and his followers about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Jesus has just finished an instruction on sin and forgiveness. There are two related teachings that Jesus offers to his disciples when they cry out for an increase in faith. The first is the familiar reminder that faith, even just a little, will enable the followers of Jesus to do wondrous things. But this uplifting and inspiring teaching is quickly followed by the second teaching, a caution about knowing one's place in God's plans. The disciples of Jesus are to understand themselves as servants to God and his plans. Even when God works wonders through us, with our mustard seed-sized faith, we must not seek praise. Our participation in God's plans is God's grace to us—nothing more, nothing less. When we are graced enough to cooperate with God, the work we do is nothing more than our obligation to God as faithful stewards. And yet, our faith enables us to believe that what we have offered in service to God, as his servants, can be made to produce a hundredfold.

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COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL

**"We are unprofitable servants;
we have done what we were obliged to do."**

*Saint Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997),
founder of the Missionary Sisters of Charity
No Greater Love*

Always be faithful in little things because our strength is to be found in them. Nothing is too small for God. He does not mean anything to diminish. All things are infinite for Him. Practice fidelity in the tiniest things, not for their own sake but because of that great thing we call the will of God... for which I myself have infinite respect.

Don't look for spectacular deeds. We should deliberately give up any desire to see the results of our work, only carry out what we are able to do as best we can, and leave the rest in God's hands. What matters is your gift of self, the amount of love you put into each of your actions.

Don't give in to discouragement when confronted with failure so long as you have done your best. Turn away from praise, too, when you succeed.

Offer everything back to God with deepest gratitude. If you feel demoralised it is a sign of pride, showing you how much faith you place in your own strength. Don't worry any more about what other people think. Be humble and nothing will ever upset you. The Lord has bound me where I am; he is the one who will unbind me.

LASALLIAN VALUE IN ACTION

Respond to the gift of your faith...

Serve without seeking praise.

Sources:
www.usccb.org
www.dailygospel.org
www.loyolapress.com