**“Have Faith in God”**

The main theme of our readings today is to “have faith in God.” Faith means believing, believing means trusting, trusting means loving, and loving means obeying. When we have faith in God, we will believe in Him, and when we believe in Him, we will have trust in Him. When we have trust in Him, we will love and desire only Him. When we love Him, we will do what He says or obey Him.

In our first reading, we heard about how as the early Church started growing, the growth led to problems which manifested itself in lack of understanding of the Gospel that says, treat others as you would want to be treated. The Apostles by the power of the Holy Spirit, solved the problem by appointing seven holy men as Deacons in the community who were filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom.

These were men of faith who believed in the gospel, trusted in the word of God, were loving to all people, and obeyed God’s commandments that says, treat others as you would want to be treated. They made sure that the Hellenists’ widows received their daily distribution just as others who were Jews did. Their faith in God led them to serve with loving care, those who were abandoned, ignored, and unlovable.

What the Apostles did in creating a new office, brings to mind what Moses did in Exodus chapter 18. At the advice of his father-in-law Jethro, Moses created a new office by appointing God fearing men to serve as minor judges in deciding lower cases the people brought to Moses, while Moses rendered judgment regarding more difficult cases. God used Jethro to enlighten Moses on how to run a smoother justice system.

What the Apostles did, still goes on in the Church today. Popes and Bishops still pray for the Church and for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is still leading the Church and will continue until the end of time. When we have faith in Jesus, we will believe and trust in His word. Deacons still perform very crucial role in the Church. All these are possible at the direction of the Holy Spirit Jesus left His Church.

In our second reading, St. Peter tells us that Jesus is the living stone rejected by the people, but precious and is the cornerstone of His Church. Peter enjoins every baptized to offer spiritual sacrifice to God. St. Peter reminds us of how God on one hand, rewards those who have faith in Him, who listens to His word, and act on them. On the other hand, how God punishes those who do not have faith in Him and disobey His word.

The reward for those who have faith, believe, trusts, and love the Cornerstone is peace that only God can give. Some other rewards are, they would praise God and enter into His eternal light. They will become adopted children of God and will never be put to shame. While those who disobey the Cornerstone who is Jesus, would be in darkness, stumble, fall, and end up with the devil in hell.

It is up to us to decide on which side we want to end up. It is how we live our lives in accordance to the Gospel, and use our freewill that our final destination would be determined. It is through how deep our faith, believe, trust, and our love of God is that we will reflect the light of Christ to the world.

In our Gospel reading, we heard Jesus giving His last discourse to His disciples at the last Supper before He was to die. Jesus strongly appealed to them to have faith, believe, trust, and love of Him as they should in God. Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem for His paschal mystery. He knew their faith in Him would be shaken by what they would see and that they would desert Him. So like a good General urging his troops not to be afraid, Jesus gave them a long pep talk to strengthen their faith in Him so they would return to Him after their trial.

Jesus told His disciples to trust and have faith in Him. That He could never deceive them. He told them that His battle plans are solid. That even though on the surface, they might see Him as defeated, humiliated and crucified, in the end, He would come out gloriously victorious. Then He would go and prepare a place for them in His Father’s house in heaven. This message is for all of us who are His faithful disciples. Yes! Jesus has prepared a place for us in heaven.

That is why Jesus wants us to make Him the only significant person in our lives so we can enter into His joy He has prepared for us. As Jesus told Thomas, He is our way, our truth, and our life, so it is true that without the way, there is no going, without the truth, we cannot know, and without the life, there is no living. It is in following Jesus that we can be sure we are on the right path. It is, then we can be sure we are on the right way that leads to true happiness.

 It is by embracing Jesus who is the truth, that we are assured we have the correct understanding of human existence and how to obey His second greatest commandment, love of neighbor. It is by accepting Jesus as the way the truth and the life that we would become like Him, and become adopted children of God. It is then we would be favored and become beloved children of God.

Our response to life with God is like being in the desert with many footpaths to an oases. The many foot paths are different beliefs in the world. This only oases has the life giving water. We are born to thirst for this water. So, we desperately need to get there; otherwise, we would die. However, out of the many footpaths, there is only one path that would surely get us to the oases. We desire and long to get to the oases but no human made GPS can get us there!

On seeing all these footpaths we can easily get lost. But with Christ, we can be sure that we will never be lost. He, is the right path. It is only through Him, we are in union with many of our brothers and sisters in the family of God, the Church. We are all on the same journey with the safe guidance of Christ. How blessed are we my brothers and sisters that Jesus Christ is our way, our truth, and our life!

As we come to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, let us ask Him for more grace so we can be His good and faithful servants.