**Endurance**

All our readings today ask us to engage our passing life with endurance. Endurance is never giving up during trials and tribulations in our desire to attain heaven. Endurance means having strength that last in the face of a series of unbroken trials. Endurance is always striving to love God by obeying His commandments when it is convenient and inconvenient.

Endurance leads to growth in our faith. It leads to the acceptance of suffering. In God’s mysterious plan, suffering is part of God’s plan for growth in our faith. God allows suffering in our lives so we can build upon our endurance.

Our first reading from the Book of Wisdom talked about God who made all things and is in charge of all things permitting us to suffer because of our sins. It is by His rebuke that we are able to make amends of our lives and believe in Him. The rebuke help us build our endurance and faith in God.

Yes, we who cannot fully understand the universe, which to God is as small as a drop of morning dew or as small as the head of a pin, how much more should we not find it difficult to understand the power of God. Though God rebukes us, He loves us and has given us His imperishable spirit so we can endure and submit ourselves to all that He might permit to happen to us.

In our second reading, Paul reminds the Thessalonians who were experiencing persecution and afflictions to hang on to their faith. He let them know of his and others’ prayers for them. Paul’s hope for them is for endurance so that their faith would be built up. It is through endurance that their faith would be built up and they would be able to discern when false doctrine come their way.

Paul let them know that the false doctrine might come by a fallen spirit, it could be in the form of oral statement, or it could come in the form of a letter. He reminds them that during persecution and trial, they should not be shaken in their faith, but hold on to what they had been thought. He reminded them not to fall for false doctrine that might tell them that Jesus Christ would be coming back soon.

We who are hear at the present moment in the Church, are going through troubled waters. If Paul were here today, he would have reminded us to keep the faith that has been handed on to us by the Apostles and endure any tribulation and trial that comes with doing so. He would have told us to hold on to the Gospel and not fall for false doctrine that might be masked as truth in any other form.

In our Gospel reading, we have an encounter between Jesus and the rich chief tax collector Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was a man who was looked upon with contempt not only because he was a tax collector but also because he was short in statue. However, he wanted to see Jesus but could not see Him because of the crowd in front of him. I can relate to Zacchaeus’ in ability to see Jesus when lots of people were in front of him.

In May of 2017, I was at Fatima in Portugal for 6 days on the 100th anniversary of the apparition of the miracle of the Sun and to honor Holy Mary for so many miraculous things she had shone me that has strengthen my faith in God. Yes, she pointed me to Jesus and told me to endure all types of tribulations and trials for the sake of her Son.

On the last day of the event, I heard that pope Francis would be passing through an area in his pope mobile. I wanted to see him and take pictures of him. But I was late in getting to the area. I tried to find a good spot to wait for his arrival but could not find one because of too many people in front of me. The only place that I could find was under a tree. But still it was not good enough. However, I stood on one of the protruding root of the tree to gain more height. But a Rev. Sister came and stood beside me.

As the pope mobile came by, I tried to take pictures of our holy father but could only get few clear pictures because most of the time, the Rev. Sister was waving her hand in front of my camera. Though I did get two pictures that were clear, when she asked me to let her see my pictures, she noticed that her hand was blocking my view of the holy father.

Through persistence and endurance, I was able to be at Fatima for Holy Mary and get a few good pictures of the holy father. Likewise, Zacchaeus through persistence and endurance was told by Jesus that **“...for today I must stay at your house.”** And on staying at his house, Zacchaeus was converted and he and his household received the ultimate reward of salvation.

As people of faith, we must remember that endurance in the face of adversity would bring us closer to God. We must not let anything or anybody intimidate us. It could be people who tell lies about us, who ridicule us, and consequently persecute us. We must remain strong in our faith. We must not abandon the authentic teachings of Jesus passed on through His apostles.

As we come to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, let us ask Him for the grace of endurance given to all Saints who are now in heaven.