

Faith

“Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe” Saint Augustine



By the time you read this article, Pope Benedict XVI would have launched the Year of Faith. He launches the year of Faith to help Catholics appreciate the gift of faith, to deepen their relationship with God and to strengthen their commitment to sharing faith with others.

Faith is not something that just happens on Sunday Mass. It happens everyday. It happens in our joys, our deepest hurts, and in our day to day experiences. To connect our faith with our lives, we need to stop and take notice of God who is steadily working in our lives. Faith is like a wind. We cannot see the wind but we can feel the wind. Faith is to feel His presence.

Gift of faith:

As St. Augustine says, faith is, to believe what we do not see but feel deep in our heart. God's Word is the very basis of our faith. His Word is absolutely trustworthy, in fact more trustworthy than the things of this world. One must surrender his total confidence to His Word, even in spite of contrary evidence. This kind of belief is a gift of faith from God. The person who has this gift will usually be prayerful, trusting, hopeful, have a positive attitude and have deep relationship with God. We can see such people in the Bible. To name them, Abraham (Gn 12:1-4, Gn:22:1-19), and Job (read the whole of Job) from old testament, Centurion (Mt. 8:5-13), the woman with hemorrhage (Lk 8:43-48), the blind man from Jericho (Lk 18:35-43). The gift of faith is the special ability that God gives to us. It is up to us to accept this gift.

Relationship with God:

The first two words in the Lord's prayer (Lk 11:1-4) tells us our relationships with God. Jesus starts out with the word “Our”, not the word “My”. The second word is “Father”. The reason is that God is not only the father of the person praying, but for others too. It is a child to father relationship.

So, to have this kind of personal relationship we should not only include Him in our daily lives, but to see and trust like a child. This personal relationship with God is not as hard as we might think, because when we become the children of God, we receive the Holy Spirit, who will begin to work in our hearts. Like how a child asks his/her father what he/she wants and believing to get it from his/her father, we can open our heart to the God to ask, seek and knock, we will receive what we really want and need, even if it's not exactly what we might think we want and need. Jesus is the one who loves us enough to give His life for us and He is the one who is the connecting link between us and God.

Having a close relationship with God does not mean that we have to spend hours a day in prayer. We can take a few minutes to thank God for those moments that make us happy or inspired during our day-- a hug from our child, a short conversation with our spouse, time with a best friend, completing a project, a flower blooming. It also means pausing briefly to listen and ask God for help in moments of need, guidance in disciplining a child, finding the right words to express yourself in a tough conversation. By noticing God at work in our lives and inviting God into even the smallest moments of our day, we can have a personal relationship with Him. Sharing the Faith:

One way that we can share our faith is by gathering with others in our family, work or in neighborhood, to read and pray the scriptures with them. Reflecting on its meaning and share our thoughts with one another. Faith-sharing gatherings invite us to develop our spiritual lives to their full potential.

Another way to share our faith is by being an example to others. By staying positive and having a good attitude even in the middle of a crisis in our life, by treating people with respect and

dignity, no matter what the circumstances is, by finding ways to be a blessing to others, by being ready to forgive others, by being patient even when you are right. By doing this people will want to know how you can be peaceful in the storm, why your kids are doing so well, why your marriage is so great, and how you know for sure about your purpose in life. And when they ask, we will have all kinds of great stuff to share.

Faith is a muscle, one has to strengthen it by exercising and stretching. Making that effort to turn everything over to God everyday is one way to stretch and develop our faith.

Lord, I believe: I wish to believe in Thee. Lord, let my faith be full and unreserved, and let it penetrate my thought, my way of judging Divine things and human things. Lord, let my faith be joyful and give peace and gladness to my spirit, and dispose it for prayer with God and conversation with men, so that the inner bliss of its fortunate possession may shine forth in sacred and secular conversation. Lord, let my faith be humble and not presume to be based on the experience of my thought and of my feeling; but let it surrender to the testimony of the Holy Spirit, and not have any better guarantee than in docility to Tradition and to the authority of the magisterium of the Holy Church. Amen. (Ref: <http://www.catholic.org>)

- Agnes P. Raj



Wisdom is Wealth

As we see nowadays, this world is more of fashions, beauty, technical developments, more entertaining and what not. This world what yields us today is unrealistic or fading happiness. To attain a real and worthy happiness, we need a good understanding of life. But what we search in life also matters more. Are we running behind money & fame or truth?

Finding the Truth: To have a better understanding in any kind of life, we need someone to guard or watch us and tell us if we are doing the right or wrong. Everyone needs more knowledge and a sense of truthfulness to handle everyday activities in this world.

The Real Blessing from above: It is a real blessing from God, if we have a powerful thinking, that perfectly says 'you are right' or 'you are wrong' or 'do the right thing' And That power is "Wisdom". Wisdom is granted from the above. It is a Blessing of Our Lord.

Wisdom Means,The quality of being wise, viewing things clearly, seeing things as they are and acting in prudent and effective ways. The knowledge of the perfect judgment, discretion, skill & dexterity and with a Holistic approach.

The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom. One who earns wisdom could even rule the world. So far in the history of the world, God Never made any rich people to known to every one or never made a rich to rule the world. But he made the Wise people to rule the world and made them rich and made them known them to the whole world.

King Solomon's Story:I like to recollect the story of how God offered the gifts of wisdom or wealth to King Solomon.

Solomon chose wisdom and that wisdom helped him to eventually achieve great wealth.

As we read through 2 Chronicles 1: 1- 16 (shortened here) God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, "Ask what I shall give you."

Solomon said to God, "You have shown great and steadfast love to David my father, and have made me king in his place. Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?"

God answered Solomon 'wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honor, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee; neither shall there any after thee have the like'.

The World of Wisdom: This world may now seem to be more of richness, happiness, technologically developed and financially challenging...but everything could be made 'True, Healthy, Happy and Blessed' only if wisdom does its role in every matter. !...

"Wisdom is radiant & unfading and She is easily discerned by those who love her and is found by those who seek her"- Wisdom of Solomon 6:12

Pray for Wisdom :Any task we undertake, or any role we are opt to play, there we need the Blessings of God, and it is 'Wisdom'. Let us Pray to God for Wisdom that gives true understanding in all the ways of our life.

"Therefore I prayed, and understanding was given me; I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came to me"- Wisdom of Solomon 7:7

- Agnes James

இம் மாதத்தின் புனிதர்

அக்டோபர் மாதம் 28 ஆம் நாள் கத்தோலிக்க திருச்சபை புனித யூதா ததேயுசின் நினைவு நாளாக கொண்டாடுகிறது. யூதா ததேயுசின் தந்தை கிளியோப்பாஸ் சூசையப்பரின் சகோதரர். தாய் மரியா தேவதாயின் உறவினர், கிறிஸ்துவின் சிலுவை அடியில் நின்று கொண்டிருந்தவர் மற்றும் இறந்த இயேசுவின் உடலுக்கு வாசனை எண்ணெய், தைலம் கொண்டு அபிஷேகம் செய்தவர். கானாவூர் கல்யாணத்தில் ததேயுஸ் மாப்பிள்ளை தோழனாக இருந்தார் என்றும் கூறப்படுகிறது. ததேயுஸ் இயேசுவை போல காட்சியளிப்பதால் தான் யூதாஸ் தூரத்தில் நின்று இயேசுவை காட்டிக்கொடுக்காமல் முத்தமிட்டுக் காட்டிக்கொடுத்தான் என்று நம்பப்படுகிறது. இவரது சகோதரர் யாகப்பரும் ஒரு அப்போஸ்தலர்.

இயேசு இறந்தபின் தோமையாரின் உத்தரவின் பேரில் ததேயுஸ் துருக்கி நாட்டிற்கு சென்று போதகம் செய்தார். அர்மேனியா, சிரியா, லிபியா, சமாரியா, யூதேயா மற்றும் பாலஸ்தீனம் நாடுகளிலும் மதத்தை பரப்பினார். இவரது திருமுகம் கத்தோலிக்க விசுவாசத்தின் அஸ்திவாரமாக கருதப்படும் ஏழு திருமுகங்களில் ஒன்று. இவர் சுற்றி வளைக்காமல் தமது கருத்துக்களை கூறியிருக்கிறார்.



அன்றைய துருக்கி நாட்டின் அரசன் அக்பர் தனது நோய் குணமாக வேண்டி தமது தூதுவர் ஹன்னான் என்பவரை யேசுவிடம் அனுப்பினார். இயேசு தம்மால் இப்போது வர முடியாது.

cond...

ஆனால் எனது சீடரை அனுப்புவேன் என்று கூறுகிறார். இயேசு தமது முகச் சாயலை ஒரு துணியில் பதித்து கொடுத்ததாக கூறப்படுகிறது. அக்பர் அதனை பெருமதிப்புடன் தனது அரண்மனையில் வைத்தார். இயேசு இறந்தபின் ததேயுஸ் துருக்கி சென்று அக்பரின் நோயை குணமாக்கினார். அக்பரும் அவருடன் அவரது குடி மக்களும் கிறிஸ்தவ மதத்தை தழுவினார்கள். அதன் காரணமாக துருக்கியில் ததேயுஸ், இயேசுவின் முக சாயலை கையில் வைத்திருப்பதாக காணப்படுகிறார். அதுவே உலகெங்கும் மிக பிரபலமாக ஆனது.

புனித யூதா ததேயுஸ் பெய்ருட் நகரில் வாளால் வெட்டி கொலை செய்யப்பட்டார். அவரது தலையையும் துண்டித்தனர். அவரது உடல் ரோம நகரில் உள்ள புனித இரயாப்பர் பேராலயத்தில் நிலவறையில்

வைக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது. இன்றும் பக்தர்கள் அவரை மகிமை செய்யும் வண்ணம் அங்கு சென்று பிரார்த்தனை செய்து வருகிறார்கள்.

புனித யூதா ததேயுஸ் கைவிடப்பட்டவர்களின் பாதுகாவலராக விளங்குகிறார். அதனால் அவர் மருத்துவமனைகளின் பாதுகாவலராகவும் கருதப்படுகிறார். இதற்கு சாட்சியாக சிகாகோ நகரின் பிரபலமான புனித யூதா குழந்தைகளின் மருத்துவமனை (St. Jude's Children's Hospital) விளங்குகிறது. குணமடைந்த மக்கள் பத்திரிகைகள் மூலமாக தமது நன்றியை வெளிப்படுத்துவதால் இவரது புகழ் மேலும் மேலும் பரவுகிறது.

புனித யூதா ததேயுசின் நினைவு நாளை வரும் 28 ஆம் நாள் கொண்டாடும் நாம் அவரிடம் வேண்டிக்கொள்வோம்.

- ஜோ. நட்டார்

Suffering either physically or mentally is an unpleasant experience for all of us. For human eyes suffering means something unwanted or a curse coming from God. So when Jesus said to His disciples that He is going to suffer and die, one of His disciples Peter cannot accept it. The same Peter who declared that Jesus is the Messiah now called Jesus aside and began to negotiate with Him but Jesus is very bold in His decision and rebuke him saying "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns." (Mark 8:33)

And Jesus explains the benefits of suffering to His disciples "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels." (Mark 8:34-38)

As Jesus said, all of His disciples suffered and died. St. Paul tells us below how he suffered.

"I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches." (2 Corinthians 11:23-28)

St. Paul did not complain Jesus for all his sufferings. In fact he understands that the suffering he endures serves as a way to be like Christ.



We can say oh! Jesus how come someone can say like this to me, how come someone can do like this to me or how come these things can happen in my life but Jesus will say to us "son, they asked me to carry the heavy Cross, I carried. I fell down three times but got up on my own and carried the Cross to the maximum distance my body can support".

There is a difference between how we suffer and how Jesus suffered. When we suffer we open our mouth and pour out our emotions but when Jesus suffered He closed His mouth. Jesus suffered a lot than anyone of us; people spat at His face, shouted at Him, laughed at Him, strike at His cheek and even removed His cloths still He kept quiet.

We know God will bless us when we live the way He wanted us to live but there is another kind of blessing which comes from others. We normally do not like it but it gives us the ultimate blessing we needed. It is the blessing of great rewards in heaven when people insult us, persecute us and falsely say all kinds of evil against us because of Christ.

"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5:11-12)

So next time when someone says against us or does against us, let us rejoice and be glad because he or she is helping us to get great rewards in heaven and continue our life journey. Long suffering is also one of the fruits of Holy Spirit.

- Leenus Rich