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First Reading: Habakkuk 1:2-3, 2:2-4
Response: “**O that today you would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts**” (Ps.94:8)
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 94:1-2,6-9.
Second Reading: 2 Timothy 1:6-8,13-14
Gospel: Luke 17:5-10

The **שְׁכִינָה**, *Shekhinah*, Presence of the Risen Lord is not seen with the eyes of flesh but with the eyes of faith. Without the sense of Christ in our lives we walk in darkness. He is our light.

Israel is in darkness and oppressed, Habakkuk cries out as we would today, “**How long Lord?**” (*Hab. 1:2*). God assures the prophet. He must also have faith. “**Write the vision down**” (*Hab.2:2*).

The believer trusts in God’s everlasting love and faithfulness, *hesed ve’emeth*. Come what may, he shows the way, he has faith in God, “**the upright man will live by his faithfulness**” (*Hab.2:4*).

We are blessed with the gift of Faith, the greatest gift and way to eternal life, and so we take up the invitation in the psalm of praise: “**Come, ring out our joy to the Lord**” (*Ps.94:1*).

What keeps us from God’s ultimate blessing is the glamour of sin, being unfaithful and hardening our hearts. “**O that today you would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts**” (*Ps.94:8*).

Our faith must grow. St. Paul tells Timothy, “**I am reminding you to fan into a flame the gift that God gave you**” (*2 Tim. 1:6*) and to “**Never be ashamed of witnessing to our Lord**” (*2 Tim. 1:7*).

We must treasure our faith with all our hearts, with prayer and trust in God. “**You have been trusted to look after something precious; guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit**” (*2 Tim. 1:14*).

Apostles ask Jesus “**Increase our faith**” (*Lk. 17:5*). Jesus teaches the power of faith and prayer, even if your “**faith the size of a mustard seed**” (*Lk. 17:6*), it can “**uproot a mulberry tree**” (*ibid.*).

Faith is a gift and “**we are merely servants who have done no more than their duty**” (*Lk. 17:10*). In giving faithful service we should not expect gain or material reward from God or others.

Read the **Gospel** for today (*Lk. 17:5-10*) and pray the prayer of the apostles, “**Increase our faith**”

In the **Liturgy**, the mystery of faith: “**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**”

In our **Creed**, we believe in God the Father Almighty and in Jesus Christ who teaches us how to pray.

Apostolic **Witness** entails believing and serving the Lord and people without expecting recompense.

FOR THE CHILDREN

Read and share with the children the **Gospel** for today (*Lk. 17:5-10*). Explain what Jesus says about faith.

Discuss the proclamation of faith which is said after the consecration in the **Eucharist**.

Teach the children to look, not only with the eyes of flesh but with the eyes of faith. (**Doctrine**)

Serve the Lord, not just for what you might get but how much you love and want to give. (*Witness*)

FOR TEENAGERS (*Shared Christian Praxis*)

What is faith? What are your experiences and understanding of faith?

Share your greatest moments of faith and share some of your most tested moments.

Share some of the Church's history, experiences and teachings on faith. (*Teacher's input*).

How does your faith fit in with the faith, history and teachings of the Church?

How do you plan to work with God in deepening your faith and helping to build his Kingdom?

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH (CCC)

"The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live on it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it and spread it...Service of and witness to the faith are necessary for salvation: "So every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven." (CCC. 1816).

"We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's in everyone," a fitting quote taken from 'The Church-on-the Ball, Praying and Playing.' (i)

*(i) Surprising as inspiring it may be, the quote does not originate from an ancient sage of the past, nor from a father of modern times, such as Nelson Mandela. The prayer book, published by Salesians and SACBC, 2010, page 40, alludes the quote to Mandela. In fact, it originates from Marianne Williamson's "Return to Love," 1992, and is not in Mandela's Inaugural Speech, 1994, unless plagiarism implied with an *imprimatur*.*

LIFE EXPERIENCE

Long ago I watched a movie about spider-like aliens on another planet. Some earthlings were their captives. It seemed a mission impossible for a team that set out to rescue them. Most of the earthlings were killed by the aliens, except a little girl who hid away in great fear of her life. In spite of the odds, due to the determination and commitment of a woman in the rescue party, the lost child was found and when saved cried out tearfully "I knew you would come back for me." Such is the trust and faith of a child in such a one who sought and fought for her. How great is our faith in our Great Redeemer?

LITTLE ANGELINA

Angelina was engrossed in her work, busily doing what seemed a catechetical assignment. "What are you writing?" she was asked. "I write what I think, then I write what God thinks." "No one really knows what God thinks," she was informed. "You will in a minute," she confidently replied as she completed her oracle." I suppose there is still a lot more for us to learn about revelation.

IMPORTANT WORD: 'Faith'

'Increase our faith' the disciples ask the Lord. We have to humbly ask, as faith here is not simply human but divine grace, a gift from God. The Gospel teaches what even a little faith can do, great things, and realize the impossible. William Barclay tells us that faith is the greatest force in the world. "He goes on to say that if we approach a thing saying, 'It can't be done,' it will not; if we approach it saying, 'It must be done,' the chances are that it will." (i) We must always remember that we approach no task alone, but that with us there is God and all his power.

(i) BARCLAY William. The Gospel of Luke. (Revised Edition). The St. Andrew Press, Edinburgh. 1990. p.216.

Watchword: “**Increase our faith**” (Lk. 17:5).

Hebrew: הוֹסֵף לָנוּ אֱמוּנָה

Greek: Προσθεσ ημιν πιστιν.

Latin: **Adauge nobis fidem.**

Portuguese: **Acrescenta-nos a fé.**

Spanish: **Aumentanos la fe.**

French: **Augmente notre foi.**

German: **Stärke uns den Glauben!**

Afrikaans: **Gee ons meer geloof.**

Zulu: **Sandisele ukukholwa.**

Xhosa: **Sandisele ukholo.**

Sotho: **Rekeletse tumelo.**

Irish: **Meadaigh an creideamh againn.**

Hosef lanu 'emunah.

Prosthes hemin pistin.