

LORD MAY WE GROW IN FAITH

Faith comes from hearing the message,
and the message is heard through the word of Christ.
Romans 10:17

Those who belong to Christ through faith and Baptism
must confess their baptismal faith before others.
Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9



Remembering that we are always and everywhere in Your holy presence,
O Lord, without seeing You, we love You, without touching You, we embrace;
without knowing You, we follow; without seeing You, we believe.
In the name our Triune God; Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier,
all glory an honor are Yours now and forever.

HYMN: WE WALK BY FAITH
We walk by faith and not by sight:
No gracious words we hear of Him Who spoke.
But we believe Him near.

We may not touch His hands and side,
Nor follow where He trod;
Yet in His promise we rejoice,
And cry 'My Lord and God!'

Help then, O Lord, our unbelief,
and may our faith abound;
To call on You when You are near,
And seek where You are found.

That when our life of faith is done
In realms of clearing light
We may behold You as You are
In fullness and endless sight.
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PSALM 91

Be with me, Lord, be with me, Lord, I pray.

You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord,
who abide in the shadow of our God,
say to the Lord:

"My Refuge and Fortress, the God in Whom I trust."

No evil shall befall You, no pain come near,
for the angels stand close by Your side
guarding You always and bearing you gently,
watching over Your life.

Those who cling to the Lord live secure in God's love,
lifted high, those who trust in God's name,
call on the Lord Who will never forsake them.
God will bring them salvation and joy.

SCRIPTURE

HEBREWS 12: 1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the Pioneer and Perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

1 JOHN 5: 1-5

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Messiah is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out His commands. In fact, this is love for God: to keep His commands. And His commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

LUKE 13:18-21

Then Jesus asked, "What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds perched in its branches."

Again he asked, "What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough."

REFLECTION

When I was in the 8th grade, my teacher, Sister Shirley, engaged us in the "Mustard Seed" experiment. We were each given a mustard seed. Sr. Shirley then directed us to the following Bible passage:

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith," and he answered: "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this sycamore 'Be uprooted and transplanted into the sea,' and it would obey you." Luke 17: 5-6

After we read the scripture, we were told that the seeds she handed out represented our faith and she instructed us to keep our mustard seed safe and on our persons for one entire week. My classmates each had a unique way to keep their seeds with them. I remember one girl found a vial, put her seed in it, and kept that vial in her pocket. Another kept his in a box. I put mine in a plastic baggie and strung a piece a yarn around the baggie, making a satchel of sorts, so I could wear it around my neck. Let me tell you, keeping a mustard seed with me at all times and making sure it didn't get lost was not an easy task! How was I going to take a shower with a seed satchel around my neck? How was I to answer all the inquiries about the plastic baggie hanging from my neck? How was I going to keep the seed from accidentally falling out of the satchel when I slept?

A week later, those of us who hadn't lost or destroyed our mustard seeds, returned them to class, thinking we had completed our task, feeling very proud of ourselves. Sr. Shirley complimented us on keeping our faith safe and secure but was a little disappointed that none of us had planted our seed as a way of keeping it from harm. "How could our faith in God grow," she reasoned, "if we don't plant the seeds of faith?" She then had us read another scripture passage:

He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches." Matthew 13: 31-32

Sr. Shirley...such a wise teacher! Through demonstration she showed us that keeping faith was a very difficult task and growing it required planting, care and letting it be there for others to take refuge in. Out loud to the class, she surmised, "If the faith the size of a small mustard seed could make a tree jump into the ocean, what could we do if our faith was even bigger?" Could we move mountains? Could we convert hate to love? Could we overcome evil in this world?

So now you're saying, "Nice story, Gretchen, but what's your point?" Today look at a mustard seed as a reminder that if we have the faith, even as small as the mustard seed, we shall overcome the evil that has befallen our world. We may take a few more licks before this whole ordeal is over but keep the faith.

Things will get better. And God will be at our side, giving us the refuge of branches, grown from the fruit of our faith, to rest upon and be sheltered by.

Peace,
Gretchen

P.S. How do you nurture your mustard seed?

INTERCESSIONS

That You, Lord, will give us eyes to see and ears to hear.
May You, O Holy Spirit help u to grow in our faith.

That we will take every advantage to deepen our faith.
May the Mass, sacraments, daily reading of Sacred Scripture
and prayer
help us to have a more intimate relationship with our God.

That we will combine our faith with the performing of good
works.
May we live out Your admonition, O Lord, to love and care for
one another.

That our faith in the Lord Jesus will bring about good in our world.
May we never hesitate to live out the Gospel message.

That we realize that we are the family of God.
May we live the life worthy of a Christian.

EYE HAS NOT SEEN

Eye has not seen, ear has not heard
what God has ready for those who love Him;
Spirit of Love come,
give us the mind of Jesus,
teach us the wisdom of God.

When pain and sorrow weigh us down,
be near to us O Lord,
forgive the weakness of our faith,
and bear us up within Your peaceful word.

Our lives are but a single breath,
we flower and we fade,
yet all our days are in Your hands
so that we can return in love
what love has made.

To those who see with eyes of faith
the Lord is ever near,



reflected in all the faces of the poor
and lowly of the world.

We sing a mystery of the past
in halls where saints have trod,
yet ever new the music rings
to Jesus, Living Song of God.

-Marty Haugen © 1982, GIA Publications

QUOTES

“Unless a life is lived for others, it is not worthwhile”
Mother Teresa of Calcutta

“To one who has no faith, no explanation is necessary.
To one who is without faith, no explanation is possible.”
St. Thomas Aquinas

“Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies.”
Mother Teresa of Calcutta

“One life is all we have and we live it as we believe in living it. But to sacrifice
what you are and to live without belief, that is a fate more terrible than dying.”
St. Joan of Arc

BLESSING

We are God’s work of art created in Jesus the Christ.
May we who have been enlightened by he Lord,
walk as children of the light.
May we keep the flame of faith in our hearts,
and may we meet Him when He comes.
May our God
Who chose us in the light of Christ.
be blessed and bless us.
May we grow in faith,
hope in the Lord,
and live in love. Amen.



LORD, YOU ARE THE CENTER OF MY LIFE
O Lord, You are the center of my life:
I will always praise You; I will always serve You,
I will always keep You in my sight.
Keep me safe, O God, I take refuge in You.
I say to the Lord, “You are my God.
My happiness lies in You alone.

I will bless the Lord Who gives me counsel,
Who even at night directs my heart
I keep the Lord ever in my sight:
since He is at my right hand, I shall stand firm.

And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad,
even in safety shall my body rest.
For You will not leave my soul among the dead,
nor let Your beloved know decay.

You will show me the path of life,
the fullness of joy in Your presence,
at Your right hand
at Your right hand happiness forever.

- Psalm 16 © 1963, The Grail, GIA Publications



**Saint John Baptist de La Salle,
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
may we do all through the eyes of faith.**

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!