

FIRST FRIDAY HOLY HALF HOUR FOR DECEMBER 2018

“Have faith in me”

Greeting

Dear friends, do you know that the problems we face in life - the challenges we deal with, or the trials we undergo, or the needs we have; whatever they may be - are never the real problem? The real problem is our lack of faith in God in whom all things are possible. Our unbelief makes us physically and spiritually blind; and it is only when we understand Jesus' words: “Let it be done to you according to your faith”, will we understand where the problem lies. It is with us.

Hymn - Come with your music

Opening Prayer - from Psalm 27 (*the congregation may repeat each line after the leader*)

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom should I fear?

The LORD is my life's refuge; of whom should I be afraid?

One thing I ask of the LORD; this I seek:

To dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,

That I may gaze on the loveliness of the LORD and contemplate his temple.

A moment of prayerful silence - so that the Word of God may enter into us and enlighten us.

Scripture Reading : Gospel of Matthew 9: 27-31 (*to be read from the Bible only*)

Reflection (*pause for silence after each aspect*)

- As these men were blind, they could have had no firsthand witnessing of Christ's miracles. They believed that Christ could heal them, simply on the testimony of others who had seen for themselves. From this point of view, their implicit trust in Christ's power to cure them was a statement of their faith in him.
- The miracle, however, is not just the restoration of their physical sight. The former blind men gained in-sight. They saw who Jesus really was and called him Lord, in other words the 'Messiah', the 'one who comes to save'. They could spiritually see!
- Jesus told them not to say anything about their healing. He did not want to be famous as a miracle-worker. He did not want people to get the wrong idea of his real mission. But the joy of the blind men at being healed was so great, they could not keep silent. They simply had to share that experience with everyone else.

Faith is a gift freely given by God to help us know him personally and to experience his healing presence in our lives. The trouble is that most of the time, we turn to God only after we have exhausted all other options. We turn to Him only because there is no other choice left. As the Lord says, "Let it be done for you according to your faith." (Mt 9:29). So, if we say our faith is strong, we should be turning to God in all things, in good times and in bad.

Faith removes the blocks from our lives so that when we encounter the Lord we become receptive to his grace. This transformative experience with the Lord enables us to joyfully share the 'good news' with all.

Personal reflection (*pause after each*)

1. How much faith do I have in Jesus? What do I believe he can do for me?
2. Do I turn to God only when all other options fail?
3. Who wins if I give everything over to God?

What can I do towards personal transformation?

- Read the good news of the Lord, about the miracles and wonders he has worked for others. Believe he can do them for you.
- Ask the Lord to come into your life. Ask him for sight to see the miracles he is already working in your life.
- Thank the Lord daily for his presence in your life. Tell others about the wonders he has done for you.

Hymn -Jesus you are my salvation

Intercessory Prayer

Leader: God of love, you invite everyone to know and love you. In faith, we come to you saying:

(R) Always, you have given an answer to our prayer.

1. For the clergy, religious and the laity, that they may see clearly the ways of the Lord and walk his path....(*pause*)....we pray to the Lord. (R)
2. For the many people who do not yet know the Lord and for those who have not received his word.(*pause*)....we pray to the Lord. (R)
3. For those who act with selfishness and pride; that their eyes might be opened to the wonders of the Lord's presence among us.(*pause*)....we pray to the Lord. (R)
4. For the gift of unwavering faith in the Lord for all of us who feel threatened by the storms of life. (*pause*)we pray to the Lord. (R)

5. For all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit, and have lost all hope, that they may experience the healing of the Lord.(*pause*)....we pray to the Lord. (R)
6. For all of us, for our families, and for local needs....(*pause*)....we pray to the Lord. (R)

Leader: Almighty and everlasting God, give us strength and joy in our faith. When we are in danger of being blinded in spirit, give us renewed confidence and trust in your love and mercy and heal our blindness. We ask you this, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Benediction follows.

Benediction hymn - Let us bow in adoration

Concluding hymn - Great things happen / Happiness is where you are

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