

Homily. 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year.C. 5/6 October 2019.

Living is a continual exchange of gift and response. It begins with the gift of life from God through our parents, families and society, and from that point onwards the exchanging never stops. Next, for believers, comes the gift of faith. This, too, comes from God through our Church, most often nursed and nourished into being by our families and schools, our experiences, relationships, Parish and the convictions of our hearts.

It was faith that Jesus was trying to instil, strengthen and grow in His disciples, often with mixed results as we've just heard. They wanted an increase in their faith and expected Jesus to wave a magic wand giving it to them. Their thinking and expectations were like those of children who expect everything good to come tumbling down upon them from their parent's hard work. Nothing at all wrong with this if we're dealing with dependent children, but a big issue indeed when dealing with responsible adults as the disciples were and as many of us are here tonight/today.

The teaching Jesus delivered to His disciples and that we've heard reminds us that we have a vital part to play in living our lives with faith on our journey through life. It's an exchange after all, meaning that we've got our side of the bargain to uphold. Therefore, we have to accept that our belief comes from our belonging, and that our little faith is deepened and strengthened by acting with faith in all that we say and do.

Paul strove to make this point with young Timothy who had been designated as a leader in the Church, heading up a faith community. We

heard Paul say to Timothy that he'd been gifted with faith and a Spirit of power, love and self-control, not a spirit of timidity and fear. It was time for him to step up to the plate, witnessing to his convictions and fanning into a flame his faith by doing so. Paul offered himself as an example. He'd worked tirelessly to build up people's faith and Church communities, suffering and being imprisoned for his efforts. This, he said, was the price of loving and serving as Christ loves and serves us all. It's what our faith and living in the Spirit and image of Christ means. Now, Timothy had to step into Paul's shoes and walk in the footsteps of Christ as he'd seen Paul doing, continuing the greta exchange of gift and response, knowing and doing, learning and living out day after day.

It's the same for us no matter what we do or where we find ourselves on our journey. We've been gifted, and these gifts and blessings demand exercise in what we say and do, by the values we hold and the practices we put in place. This is our part in the exchange, our side of the deal, our duty to God and one another. It's our adult response and responsibility to God, the giver of all good gifts.

It's our witness and actions that take the Church out of here, into our homes and relationships, onto the streets and the big world beyond these doors. We can be confident that God is with us, for wherever we are and whatever may happen to us God lives in us, no further away than our next breath or the beat of our hearts, all being a gift to us from above.