

Homily. 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year C. 17/18 August 2019.

It's a fact that faith is what makes our world go around. Faith is the foundation of all of our daily communication, relationships and dealings with each other. This is why when faith is breached or broken we get so badly hurt. When people promise us something and then renege, not delivering on their words, we feel greatly let down.

Breaking one's word and promises is a bad experience, but when people break faith with us by their deeds, it's even more devastating. Only think of having your car or house broken into, vandalised and stolen and being robbed as many of us have and you easily grasp the power of these faith-breaking actions. Again, just think of the faith we have in our spouses or business partners, only to discover at some point in time that we've been cheated on by our trusted other or defrauded by our friend. It's absolutely soul destroying. These two examples are proof enough surely that the old saying holds true; actions really do speak louder than words.

Everything in our daily lives depends upon the integrity of the social contract of our mutual faith. When this integrity and faith is called into question, being broken by false words and wicked deeds, feelings of insecurity, fear and sorrow, hurt, anger and betrayal quickly fill our hearts and minds, poisoning the well of trust within us. We call this betrayal sin.

In religious terms, everything I've said holds true, except that it all starts and ends with God. If our faith journey through life has taught us anything, it's that God never breaks God's word to us or acts contrary to

love and our well-being. Our faith in God is built on this certainty, this covenant, sealed as it is in the loving self-giving and sacrifice of Jesus Christ for us and for the whole world's well-being. Our faith in the Lord must lead us to actions and deeds that express the faith we've been gifted to experience. Since actions speak louder than words it's our doing that best expresses and deepens our faith in God, and by consequence, in each other. The beliefs and values that we hold have to show themselves in the actions we take and by the way that we choose to live our lives. Sadly, it's inevitable, as Jesus said that this will sometimes put us on a collision course and into conflict with others, even dear and loved ones.

Jeremiah the Prophet collided with the King and rulers of his day because of what he said and did in God's name, suffering for his trouble. Yet, we heard, that he was raised up from the mud at the bottom of the dry well, pre-figuring the resurrection of Christ. Remember, too, that Jesus wasn't killed because he was a nice guy who agreed with everyone and went along with everything. He suffered and was assassinated by Caesar's representative and by the rulers and people of His time for speaking out the truth and for breaking laws so as to put people first, healing, forgiving and caring for them, especially those at the margins of society.

In His Spirit, we are to honour our words, showing our faith in the Lord by our deeds. To live faithfully we need much courage and fortitude, which only God can give to us. Let this Eucharist encourage and grace each of us with these essential gifts so that we can practice what we believe.