

Homily. 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year.B. 11/12 September 2021.

Having faith in something means that we trust it and what's been said about it. For example, we have faith in medicines and vaccines because we trust what Doctors and health professionals have studied and told us about these products, seeing and hearing for ourselves the evidence of how they've worked to help and heal people. We have this sort of faith in our washing power, our electrician, mechanic and bank and in everything we buy and use. If we don't have this faith then we cease using these goods and services. We stop throwing away our time and money on them and go hunting for something or someone better to replace them.

It's the same story in all of our relationships. We trust our friends and spouses, partners, families, work colleagues and leaders because we've come to believe in them, investing our time, energy and lives in the people who matter to us. If they let us down badly and repeatedly then we lose faith in them, sometimes so much so that we find that we have to leave these people behind, starting out afresh to discover new trust and faith.

Jesus wanted to know who the people and who His disciples thought that He was? He knew full well that what they thought about Him would reveal who He was to them. It would tell Him if they had arrived at the point of being able to trust, have faith and belief in Him. All of us have to answer this question at various points throughout our lives. Jesus hopes that each and every one of us can, like St. Peter did, confidently say that He is our Lord, the Saviour of our hearts, our lives and of the whole world. Since we're here today creating the Church, His Body, I assume that all of us have in our own way and words come to this conclusion. I assume that

we're on the path of true faith, daily growing in trust in the Lord, deepening our belief in Him as our Saviour, as we journey onwards through our lives in company with Jesus and each other. The question that arises next for us is; What we're going to do about this faith of ours?

Jesus gave us a direct answer to this when he said that if we're going to follow Him then we have to imitate His way, daily taking up His cross of service and loving sacrifice for all. St. James added some more clarity to this teaching, telling us that our trust and faith in Christ has to be more than strong emotions, fine words, thoughts and prayers. James knew from experience, as we do, too, that feelings, words and thoughts alone just don't cut it in the real world where many seek justice because they have less than they need when others have more than they can want.

The test for proving our faith in Christ comes by the decisions we make and the practices and sacrifices we take to help each other as we make our way through this life. Faith is like this, says St. James; If good works do not go with it, then it is quite dead. In the language of Jesus, following Him means opening ourselves up to His mind, heart and spirit, helping, healing and serving those who cross our path by His cross that we carry. Surely, this is point of our Mass, of our community and Eucharist; That in taking the Lord into ourselves we might be nourished on Him, becoming more like Him day by day. For the only real way we can prove our faith is by the good deeds we do, showing our trust in Jesus to the world.