

## Our Basic Requirement as Christians

Twenty-seventh Week of Ordinary Time – October 2, 2016 – Luke 17:5-10

We live in a rewards based culture. If you get a “Happy Meal” you also get a toy. If you buy one sandwich, why not get the other at half price. If you buy one shirt...you get one free. If you shop at this store you will get a coupon for a greater value later. The basic requirement of the modern economic culture is to be rewarded for our fidelity.

The problem is we tend to do the same in our faith life. There is this sense that if we are good Christians then we will be rewarded with eternal salvation. Many times this gets boiled down to a minimalistic ideal of what constitutes good Christian behavior.

Jesus challenges this idea in this week’s gospel. The disciples are asking for an increase in faith. They see faith as a commodity, if you have some, why not more? Jesus says to them, **‘If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea, and it would obey you.’** We are called this week to understand that faith is not a tangible substance that we possess, but rather, it is one of the *Three Theological Virtues*. It is a gift which permeates the human soul. It is readily available to us.

This begs the question... So what? If I have faith in God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit...Isn’t that enough? Jesus’ response is that small faith can do great things. He is also affirming that faith is really about understanding that our role as Christians is service. There is no minimal aspect to faith. If you are a disciple of Christ then you are committed to the very ideals and responsibilities that are the hallmark of Christian faith and tradition.

As we move into the month of October with a focus on Respect Life, we are challenged to be committed to the fact that being pro-life is an all-encompassing value on the core belief that life begins at conception, that all human life has dignity, that human life at every stage has value.

Therefore, as a faith-filled Christian we must work to end abortion, starvation, hunger, human trafficking, violence, war, euthanasia, poverty, prostitution, environmental pollution, displaced refugees, immigration issues and any other forms of suffering that diminishes the dignity of the human person. This would be what is expected, not what will be rewarded. The basic requirement of being a Christian is our role and responsibility to do our part to end human suffering.

Jesus tells the disciples (and us) **“When you have done all you have been commanded, say, “We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do.”**

Blessings!

  
Sue Schettler