

Sunday Reflection

◆ **First Reading:** *Acts 12:1-11*

◆ **Second Reading:** *Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18*

◆ **Gospel:** *Matthew 16:13-19*

How often do you and I stop to reflect on the gift of Faith we received?? Are we truly grateful for this spiritual gift that has been bestowed on us? ; During this Pandemic is your Faith a source of strength to see you thru' each day?

Have you ever thought about people who have no Faith?, How do they manage?, How do they get by?, after all they have to confront the same realities of daily life along with the rest of us. In st.Paul's 2nd letter to the Thessalonians he states**FOR FAITH IS NOT GIVEN TO EVERYONE**....now why is that? I wonder!, have you an answer for that?, st.Paul has no explanation either. This issue has my mind boggled, Why do some receive the gift of Faith, and others do not?, as we say in the english language "that's a 64 thousand dollar question" ;

Is it that those without Faith really don't deserve it? nothing could be further from the truth, matter of fact there are atheists who lead exemplary lives, righteous, generous and kind "BUT NO!, I DON'T BELIEVE THERE IS A GOD" ;

And they would never play down nor disrespect people of Faith. If the truth be known there are non-Faith people and they would put the rest of us to shame for their great testimony to an upright and honest way of living. And how is it that some who were baptized, received their 1st Holy Communion and confirmed, later come along an' say "No!, I really don't believe in all this religious stuff", so off they go only to show up at the occasional wedding, then finally in a coffin! I met George a few years ago in a care home, his daughter asked me to visit him, he didn't seem to be interested in my pastoral visit "RELIGION!, NAH!!, I GAVE UP ON IT YEARS AGO!!", and that was that!

Then on another occasion there was the kindly undertaker at the Kensal Green crematorium, as we waited outside for the hearse to manoeuvre into position, she politely said to me “I wish I had the Faith that you have, but I don’t”!!

There’s another set of non-Faith-people who are aggressive towards people of Faith, they would prefer to humiliate and ridicule anything that leads to spiritual inner peace and ultimately to Heaven. And what about that other group who once cherished their Faith, then just let it slip into oblivion even to the point of forgetting the “Our Father” ;

2.Maybe you are already asking WHY do I use a capital “F” when referring to the Faith?? when using capitals we refer to something important, something of significance and not to be forgotten. But the gift of Faith is precisely that, IMPORTANT, SIGNIFICANT and NOT TO BE FORGOTTEN, Why? because the gift of Faith is a spiritual treasure, it is not for any of us to size-up nor “judge” how the Holy Spirit has distributed the gift of Faith ; If someone else has not been given that gift, then will they be excluded from entering Heaven?, THAT’S NOT OUR BUSINESS!!, NO-ONE IS EXCLUDED FROM THE DIVINE PLAN OF SALVATION ; the Holy Spirit can reach all hearts at any time in ways unknown nor obvious to the rest of us. Then there are others who are indifferent to God’s invitation, and those who have outrightly rejected it with clear knowledge and full consent, this is a painful theme for another day.....

IF you have received the gift of Faith, it’s for a PURPOSE, you don’t have to ask WHY was I given this great gift?, but rather WHAT am I doing to develop it?

What are you and I doing so that our Faith continues to grow, blossom and mature as the months and years pass? Some day when I leave this world, will my Faith resemble a vast harvest of very fine wheat?(...use your imagination!, the sower and the reaper rejoice together at harvest time....)

This Sunday we celebrate the solemnity of those 2 apostles of great Faith, saints Peter and Paul, they had completely different characters, Peter was an administrator, Paul was an evangelizer, Peter had been a personal friend of Jesus, whereas Paul was converted on his way to Damascus ; both apostles had one thing in common, THEY LOVED JESUS THE SAV-IOUR, so much so they were willing to die for their Faith in their Lord and Master, their Faith was rock solid.

Perhaps it would be an idea this weekend to express special gratitude to the Lord-of-Life for the gift of Faith that was freely granted to you and me, or maybe ask yourselves “WHAT WOULD MY LIFE BE LIKE IF I HAD NEVER BEEN GIVEN THIS GREAT SPIRITUAL GIFT???”

Also this weekend we could pray that acts of terrorism and violence may not leave us disheartened with the general flow of human life, we’ve enough to deal with as things are during this Pandemic, but acts of vicious violence such as in Reading(..pronounced “Redding”...) last Saturday, 20th June, certainly don’t help our present situation, the killing of 3 friends as they chatted

3.together in a public park. Their killer “went on a rampage” and stabbed the three to death, a 25 year old man has been detained. Why are more people of this age group turning to false ideologies, violence and hopelessness?, something has gone terribly wrong in our world during these last 20 years, to see troubled people acting as described above is a sure sign of a troubled world, what would you say has gone wrong?? In the meantime spare a thought and a prayer for the families of those 3 men, also why not pray a Rosary for all who have died of the Covid-19, now in excess of 43.000 here in the U.K.....stay healthy, God bless for now...

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