


# Read

 Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4  
Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9  
2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14  
Luke 17:5-10

## LIVING THE WORD

### Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time October 6, 2019




#### REFLECTION

Do you believe that God can take care of everything? Most of us probably need to work on that. Faith in God is a central theme of today's readings. In the First Reading, the prophet Habakkuk asks God why he isn't doing anything about violence in the world. God says just to *wait* because his timing will not be late. Our desires rarely line up with God's timing. That's where faith comes in. Really, faith is just letting God be God and stopping to control things around us. After we have tried our best, the hardest and best thing is to put our faith in God that he will bring about the best outcome, even if it's not what we want. Remember: God can create the earth from nothing. He can do absolutely anything, He sees everything, and he loves you more than anyone does. As Padre Pio is quoted as saying, "Pray, hope, and don't worry."



#### ACTION

Has there ever been a time when something didn't go your way, but in hindsight you can see it was for the best? For example, maybe you didn't make it onto a sports team, but looking back you can see that it opened up time for another activity you wouldn't otherwise have done? With your friends and family, discuss ways in which you can see now that God was actually taking care of you by disappointing you at the time in order to give you something greater. Next time something doesn't go your way, have faith that God is bringing you something better.

*"Faith must become  
a flame of love within us."* 

—Pope Benedict XVI

#### ? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Next time something happens that you don't want to happen, what will you say? Compose a prayer of faith and trust.
- ❖ What are some of the things God does in the Bible that make him worthy of our faith in him? (Hint: if you can't think of anything, read Exodus and take notes.)



October 6, 2019

## TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### LECTIONARY #141C

Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4

Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14

Luke 17:5-10

## Prepare for the Word

*The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.*

### Leader's Context

"Increase our faith," the Apostles ask Jesus (Luke 17:5). We understand their desire, and likely can relate to it. We all have "increase our faith" moments! Faith is, after all, a gift, and yet it is also a response to the gift, a turning of our mind, heart, and will to God. It is this response of faith that we will explore today.

**Q FOCUS:** *Lord, increase our faith.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

Ordinary Time is an extended period in which to learn about, reflect upon, and more fully understand what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Particularly in the later Sundays of the liturgical year, the readings lead us toward a reflection on faith, leading toward consideration of life and the end of earthly time.

### Church Teaching Connection

Faith is a gift of God, freely offered to human beings. God reveals himself to us in love. Faith is also our response to God, through which we find the ultimate meaning of life. In faith, we submit our minds, hearts, and will to God, and accept the truth that God has revealed (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 26, 142, 143).

## Hear the Word

*Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.*

### Gospel Acclamation

*Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.*

Alleluia, alleluia.

### Gospel

Luke 17:5-10

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

*All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.*

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." The Lord replied, "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.

"Who among you would say to your servant who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here immediately and take your place at table'? Would he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat. Put on your apron and wait on me while I eat and drink. You may eat and drink when I am finished'? Is he grateful to that servant because he did what was commanded? So

should it be with you. When you have done all you have been commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do.'"

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Everyone may be seated.*

## Reflect on the Word

*When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:*

Faith. Do you have faith? This seems an easy question to answer, for if you are here, you surely have faith. But then again, we would expect that the Apostles had faith. Yet, when they asked Jesus to increase their faith, notice how Jesus responds. Not by promising that it will be so, but rather by saying, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed" (Luke 17:6). A mustard seed was the smallest known seed at the time of Jesus. A mustard seed is very small. Jesus seems to be saying to the Apostles, "If you had faith at all." This is where we begin our reflection today.

Faith is a gift. God wants every person to know him, and because of this, God reveals himself to us. Without the action of the Holy Spirit, enflaming our hearts and illuminating our minds, we could not have faith.

Faith is also an action on our part, in response to the gift of faith that we are offered. In faith, we turn our hearts, minds, and wills over to God. And the more we do so, the greater the possibility that faith will grow in us, and will affect the way we live.

► How do you perceive God's presence?

► How does this help you to have, and to grow in, faith?

Jesus uses the image of a mustard seed. A seed carries within it the essence of what the seed will become when it is nurtured and it matures. With mustard seed faith, we begin to place our lives in God's hands and trust that we do not do so in vain.

► What helps the seed of faith to grow in you?

What Jesus says next about faith is truly perplexing. "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" (Luke 17:6). Certainly, this is not a statement to be taken literally. And yet, even as an image for our reflection, it is a powerful one. If we have faith, we can do great things, mysterious and seemingly impossible things. Faith changes our perspective. With faith, we face the difficulties and uncertainties in our lives through God's grace, relying on God rather than ourselves.

► What situation have you faced in which faith made the difference?

If we listen closely to what Jesus says, it is not only that having faith will help us to get through situations, however. With faith, we can do things. Wonderful things. Life-changing things. With faith, we can get beyond obstacles (Move a mulberry tree? Sure!). With faith, we can act as Christ's people in the world, bringing peace, advocating for justice, abolishing the hurt and need that so many people experience.

While the next portion of the Gospel passage seems disconnected from the conversation about faith, perhaps it is not. Because those who place their hope, trust, and faith in Jesus Christ are called to serve, and to do so willingly, not out of obligation, but in gratitude for the love, friendship, and salvation we know in Jesus.

## Wrapping It Up

*Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 42.*

What helps you to have faith?

What commitment have you made to nurture and grow in faith?

What seemingly impossible thing can you do through faith?

# Act on the Word

## Mustard Seed Faith

*For this activity, you will need mustard seeds.*

Give each teen a mustard seed. Invite them to hold the seed and notice how small it is. Remind the group that it is not the amount (quantity) of faith we have, but rather who we have faith in. God is greater than any problem or task. When we place our faith in God, great things are possible.

Ask the group to reflect on their faith. In pairs, invite them to talk about their faith. What helps them nurture and grow in faith? What is the result of faith in their lives? What does faith lead them to do? What challenges their faith? In what ways does faith get them through difficult moments?

## What Is Your Mulberry Tree?

*You will need newsprint and markers for this activity.*

As you begin this exercise, read the first paragraph of the Gospel passage again. Share with the teens a time in which you faced a seemingly impossible situation through faith. For example, a time in which you reached out to someone you did not know or whose needs seemed beyond your capacity, or a time in which you felt compelled to start a ministry, share your faith, or speak out on behalf of a population that is unrepresented or underrepresented in your parish or town. Liken this situation to the mulberry tree in today's Gospel passage. Jesus used this extreme illustration to get people's attention, and to drive the point home that in faith, we can cooperate with the grace of God and act as Christian people in the world.

Divide into small groups of four or six teens. Give each group a sheet of newsprint and markers. Tell the teens to draw a large tree on the newsprint.

Invite the groups to share their "mulberry tree." What seemingly impossible thing do they need to do through faith? If the group seems to be having a difficult time identifying their "tree," share examples with them of struggles you have seen them face

within their group. Tell the teens to write their seemingly impossible thing on the tree. Once each group has finished their reflection, invite them to share with the large group.

## Three-Minute Witness

*No supplies are needed. However, for this exercise to be as effective as possible, coordinate with your religious education coordinator, so that your teens will have an opportunity to share their witness.*

Invite the teens to develop a three-minute witness about the impact of faith in their lives. How does faith help them face difficulties? What does faith lead them to do in relationships, service, at school, and in the parish? Ask them to share a story that illustrates a time in which faith made a difference in their lives. Divide the teens into small groups and give them time to practice their witness. Ask them to critique each other.

If possible, arrange a time for the teens to share their witness with children in your religious education program, or with adults, such as your RCIA participants. If this is not possible, provide an opportunity for each teen to share his or her witness with the larger group.

## Closing Prayer

*Almighty God,  
you are the rock on which our faith is grounded.  
Hear the prayers we make with confidence in your  
unfailing love.  
Keep us steadfast in faith during times of trouble  
and hardship.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

## For Next Sunday

*To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at [www.ltp.org/lwgr](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.*