

## **Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle A**

Deacon Frank D'Auguste

Today's Readings are all about love and faith, and a deep trust in the Lord. In our first Reading, Isaiah is presenting to the people that the Lord will deliver them from exile, that they are not – and never will be – forgotten. That the love of the Lord is, indeed, alive and living. He tells them to have trust, to have faith, to be willing to believe that the Lord is there with them.

In our second Reading, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians, Paul is explaining to the people of the Church in Corinth that they need to trust and to believe that the Lord knows all and will do what is right for them. In effect, he is presenting a deeper meaning of faith using himself as the example.

Now we have the Gospel (Matthew 6: 24-34).

Who was Jesus addressing in this discourse? This is the continuation of the famous "Sermon on the Mount." And that changes things just a little. Jesus has just told the people who and what they are. He has given them the "Beatitudes" to help the people understand clearly what they are to expect, and how they should act.

Here Jesus is presenting himself as the true Teacher of Law as it was given to Moses on the Old Testament. But now, Jesus now goes deeper. He tells them how special they are in the eyes of Lord, how loved they are. Now, through his teachings, Jesus brings Faith into play. This is the Faith that moves mountains. This is the Faith that allowed Peter to walk on water. This is the Faith that we all try to obtain. It is the Faith that, at times, we fall short of. And that is point. If we fall short, we can again try – and try again each time – making it a little further up the mountain.

I understand the opening line in Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 6, Verse 34" "You cannot serve God and Mammon." That is indeed a true statement, but one that also is the hardest admonition to follow. In my humble opinion, and where I agree that you can't worship the mighty dollar. The reality in this day and age is that you still need it in this world to live. I am not one of those who can just let

each day come and expect that God will provide and I will be ok. I don't have that ability or understanding as some of our saints have.

I, like many people, need to know that my family is covered. I am not a person of means, but I also don't have many needs in this world. I don't need the best car, the finest clothes, and the best house. I grew up in a family in which material needs were never the thing that you strived for. Growing up in a family of nine, you learned that to be at the table on time was important... not which chair you sat in!

So how do you keep it real, without looking like a fool or always trying to "one-up" others, or to get the best raise by doing someone else in? How do live and not worship the dollar?

The answer is exactly what Jesus is talking about. You need to put God first, and sometimes you need to do things that are better for others than for yourself.

My wife could not look at a child in pain without feeling the pain. That is why my children were brought up in the Faith that, by helping others, you are doing exactly what that Faith demands of you. When it comes to material things, they learned that, like the Scriptures say, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given you besides." The point is to put others before yourself, to have the Faith that God knows what best for us. That is truly the message in the "Sermon on the mount."

How do we serve God and his people before ourselves, and have Faith that the Lord know what is best for us? To be willing to say, "Lord help me with what I need and with what I want," that is, indeed, a truly difficulty task.

The Lord will help me with what I need and this does actually happen in this world, but often we never realize until later that what we received was the best thing that could have happened. How do we rely on our Faith at those times when we need God the most? That, my friends, is the million dollar question for many of us.

I do believe that the Lord provides me with what I need... not necessary what I want! And that is hard to understand. Many times you don't see the "proof" until after what you need is done. Sometimes you don't see it at all.

Some of the greatest gifts I have ever received are the ones that I never saw as a gift, but as quite something else. To lose my job and finally discover that the loss of that job made it possible for me to stay home and help my wife when she needed me. To finally get a position where the people are not necessary nice, but still to find out that they wanted me to work from home at the same time my wife needed me the most, this was God at work. We get what we need from God, not necessarily what we want. I have seen this over and over in many people's lives, but it not something that you can tell them. They need to discover it for themselves.

This is the Faith that Jesus Christ was preaching on the mount. To have Faith when all else fails, to have trust when all seems lost. To simply say, "Ok, God, it's in your hands." To follow when you know that others will think that you are a little strange. To support others in need, and to have the trust that you bring to the Lord when times are good and bad. To say that the Lords does indeed love me.

The Sermon on the Mount is a presentation of the Lord's love for each and every single person out there. The Lord loves us and asks us to have Faith in the fact that he knows what best for us. To be willing to have the Faith that Jesus is Lord and to trust fully in Him. This is not always a simple task, and, at times, you move forward in Life only by Faith and prayer. But remember always, in good times and bad, the Lord truly knows what is best.