

My Friends in the Lord Jesus,

St. Paul says that he has a secret to share in our second reading today from his Letter to the Philippians. Sharing a secret! St. Paul shares his secret on how to live a life of solid faith. It is first and foremost relying on the grace and strength of Christ Jesus. “I have learned the secret of being well fed and of going hungry, of living in abundance and of being in need. I can do all things in him who strengthens me.” Christ Jesus is our strength and our shepherd. Today’s responsorial psalm, Psalm 23, proclaims, “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want...I fear no evil; for you are at my side with your rod and your staff that give me courage...”

St. Paul also shares another aspect of his secret on living a life of faith. The secret of living a life of faith is not a solo event. The secret of success is to rely on the “brothers and sisters” of the faith community. St. Paul thanks the Philippians for their help and concern, “it was kind of you to share in my distress.”

Christians are interdependent; we need one another. Jesus founded as a community of brothers and sisters. This is not simply a pious sentiment, but a teaching of the Lord. The ties that bind us as a community is hearing in the word of God, and acting on it. Jesus says, my mother, my brothers and sisters are those who hear the word of God and act on it. He further taught what is essential for living as a community, “forgive your brother or sister from your heart;” love one another as I love you.” He gave us the Golden Rule “Do unto others as you would want done unto you.”

This is all part of the secret of success. The secret of faithful commitment to Jesus and the family of the Church. St. Paul’s “secret” is one that is meant to be shared.

Fr. Ron