

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 5th, 2025

Reading 1 – Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4

How long, O LORD? I cry for help
but you do not listen!
I cry out to you, "Violence!"
but you do not intervene.
Why do you let me see ruin;
why must I look at misery?
Destruction and violence are before me;
there is strife, and clamorous discord.
Then the LORD answered me and said:
Write down the vision clearly upon the tablets,
so that one can read it readily.
For the vision still has its time,
presses on to fulfillment, and will not disappoint;
if it delays, wait for it,
it will surely come, it will not be late.
The rash one has no integrity;
but the just one, because of his faith, shall live.

Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4 - First, let's do a little background for today's reading. We know that Israel became a nation under King David and his successor King Solomon (David's son) and was united until right after the death of Solomon c. 931 BCE. The ten tribes of the northern area were disgruntled about the heavy taxation imposed by Solomon who was constantly building and needed the money to pay for the cost of construction, which would have included the first temple in Jerusalem in the south. They split off, leaving two tribes in the south—Benjamin and Judah. Several countries, one of which was Assyrian, were eager to control bigger areas, and around 722 BCE, they overpowered the northern territory after which the ten tribes were dispersed and scattered throughout Assyria. (Remember last week, we had the prophet Amos trying to warn the people of the north that God would punish them for their failure to follow the covenant.)

All that remained of the original nation were the two tribes in the south. They were living in a time of prosperity, and as can happen, they too began to be self-serving and were abandoning the covenant—especially ignoring the command to take care of the poor and needy. Injustice was rampant. While little is known about the prophet Habakkuk, he appears on the scene somewhere around 605 BCE and is aware that his people are about to be conquered by the Chaldeans (Babylonians), who were known for their ruthlessness. As a man of faith, Habakkuk held the

common belief of his day: God is in control of everything and uses enemies to punish people who have strayed from living righteously. The prophet, deeply distraught and remembering that God has been merciful in their past, questions why God, the all-powerful presence would choose this route to punish—especially since there were still some righteous people in the land. God hears his cry and has the prophet write down a vision, promising it will be fulfilled in due time. Habakkuk is instructed to remain strong and to not give up. The just person, because of his faith shall live. As with all the Old Testament prophets, there is a note of hope and a bright vision for the future.

We know that God's punishment came in 587 BCE, when Judah was invaded. The temple and the city of Jerusalem were destroyed, many of the inhabitants were killed, and a large number were forced into exile. The other two readings encourage us to be strong, to live our faith courageously, serving others (and as we do, also God) even in the face of adversity. The vision will be fulfilled! CHS

Comments/Questions: In light of the disarray in our country-and maybe struggles in our personal lives—how do we continue to have faith and “do what we are obliged to do?”

Sources: Paulist Biblical Commentary, Lector Guide, Lecture on Habakkuk.

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

R. (8) If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD;

let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;

let us joyfully sing psalms to him.

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Come, let us bow down in worship;

let us kneel before the LORD who made us.

For he is our God,

and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides.

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Oh, that today you would hear his voice:

"Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,

as in the day of Massah in the desert,

Where your fathers tempted me;

they tested me though they had seen my works."

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Reading 2 – 2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14

Beloved:

I remind you, to stir into flame

the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands.

For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice
but rather of power and love and self-control.
So do not be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord,
nor of me, a prisoner for his sake;
but bear your share of hardship for the gospel
with the strength that comes from God.

Take as your norm the sound words that you heard from me,
in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.
Guard this rich trust with the help of the Holy Spirit
that dwells within us.

2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14 - We have already talked a bit about the Pastoral Letters coming to us from a strong Pauline influence but more than likely not written by Paul himself. They situate Paul in a Roman prison, undergoing suffering and sometimes lamenting that Christians are not coming to visit him—yet grateful for those who do. The letters give us a window into a phase of early Church development approximately around the year 100 CE. Given the need to solidify the early Christian communities in the absence of great leaders such as Paul, they focus on providing structure, stability, and authentic teaching at a time when there are opposing forces. They also speak of the need to speak the message of “Christ Jesus” in a manner that can be understood by the culture in which they reside.

In 1 Timothy, we see an evolution in the Jewish community’s leaders (presbyters), who were wisdom people—elders of the community who helped guide the synagogue and to protect unity. In order to provide a stable community to continue the mission of Jesus, this leadership position moved into that of Christian presbyters, who had a supervising role that at first probably did not include presiding at Eucharist or baptisms but was more of the guiding role of elders and wisdom people. However, they did preside over prayer of the sick and anointings. Eventually, they moved into presiding over Eucharist and baptisms and were called episkopos (bishop) and became the official teachers of the tradition, which included silencing those who offered wrong teaching. The Church was based in houses, and presbyter/bishops were to be like fathers, responsible for the “home”, providing example and discipline. 1 Timothy focuses more on the structures of the “house Church” and the qualities of those chosen to lead it. They are to be blameless, upright and holy, self-controlled and not arrogant or quick tempered. (One can see while Paul in his missionary role probably would not have qualified, since at times, he exhibited characteristics contrary to the requirements of a bishop. At times he was quick tempered, not always dignified, and wished that his circumcising opponents who wanted to Judaize the Church would slip with the knife of circumcision and castrate themselves! He also accused and said of some of his opponents, “Their God is their belly.”)

2 Timothy is not quite as strong on structure and personal qualities but, as in today's passage portrays a Paul who cares greatly about his companion and disciple and encourages him to follow His example—his fierce loyalty and courage in proclaiming Christ, as well as his willingness to suffer as a bold leader. He is to “stir into flame the gift of God you have through the imposition of my hands (early signs of ordination ritual?) The Paul portrayed in these letters has a bottom-line desire: To see the Post-Apostolic stage of the Church flourish through powerful preaching, example, and strong leadership. Those who would like to explore a detailed explanation, please read: "The Church the Apostles Left Behind by Raymond Brown. Paulist Press--one of our top New Testament Scholars!"

Comments/Questions: Today there seems to be a strong tension between those who identify with the Church as Body of Christ guided by the inner power of the Spirit—a community of people that places relationship at the core of everything we do, and those who lean heavily on structure, authority and obedience. Both groups can go to extremes. Where do you stand in the midst of it all? As has been asked before, what kind of courage does it take to be a follower of Jesus in today's Church—and in the world?

Gospel – Luke 17:5-10

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.'"

Luke 17: 5-10 – The major theme in this piece of the Gospel Luke, is faith. And to this subject of faith, the pericope hones in further by speaking on acquiring and maintaining it as well.

At first, before Jesus gives his metaphor on maintaining faith. We start by reading how the disciples want to acquire more faith (this coming after Jesus warning the disciples about themselves or others “stumbling” in their faith). And although this may seem like a reasonable response to what they just heard from their teacher. Jesus reminds them (and us today), that the size of our faith is not the issue (if you had the faith of a mustard seed...). Instead, when acquiring faith, what matters more is the quality and the depth of that faith because that faith (no matter how it is obtained) uproots a mulberry tree and has it toss itself into the sea by just a command.

Now once we have obtained faith, our task from there is to maintain that. To this point Jesus relates this concept to a servant who continuously works tirelessly until all his work is done. Similarly, we are called to work tirelessly to build up our faith, guard against complacency, and spread love generously to the world and the people around us. Continuing in this mission until we finally embrace the Kingdom after a long journey.

But in the meantime, we will continue to try our best to grow our faith. We are also called to help others stoke the fire of their faith. Which reminds us of the servant imagery in today’s gospel. An imagery that reflects that our work is not self-centered but is focused on serving others. -P.M.

Comments/Questions- In what ways do you continue to maintain and grow your faith and avoid the issue of stagnation? And if your faith has stagnated before, how did you get out of that slump?

Sources: Maria Barga, Workbook for Lectors, 2024, pgs. 270