



Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)
September 15, 2024

Faith or Works?

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

Unfortunately, these two facets of our faith are often pitted against each other. In many of his letters, St. Paul insists on the superiority of faith, while today’s reading from St. James underscores the importance of good works. It is understandable that one might get confused. Actually, both are vital. In fact, one without the other does not result in full Christian living. At issue is how they fit together.

Paul’s insistence on faith was probably a corrective for the erroneous belief that we can earn eternal happiness by our good works. This was not simply a problem with the Jewish law and practices but with the religious law and practices of many societies. Even today

we find people convinced that obeying religious laws assures salvation. To this, Paul insisted that it was faith in Jesus that saved, not conformity to law. Paul never said that believers should not obey the law.

Rather, he would insist that such obedience should flow from faith, not vice versa. It seems that the people to whom today’s second reading was directed took the idea of “faith alone” to an extreme. They were not committed to good works. This letter corrected that error. It states that faith without works is dead. In fact, good works demonstrate the authenticity and depth of one’s faith.

The message for today should be clear. Faith and works belong together. Genuine faith manifests itself in works of love and mercy, and the works of love and mercy that flow from faith are of God. †

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 50:4c–9a

The Lord GOD opened my ear;
I did not refuse, did not turn away.

James 2:14–18

What good is it, my brothers,
if someone says he has faith
but does not have works?

Mark 8:27–35

[Jesus] asked [his disciples],
“But who do you say that I am?”

**Faith without works
or works without faith
does not result in
full Christian living.**



A Word from Pope Francis

Jesus asks his disciples: “Who do you say that I am?” ... [The disciples] had to take that decisive step, from *admiring Jesus* to *imitating Jesus*. Today too, the Lord looks at each of us personally and asks...*Who am I for you?* This question calls for more than a quick answer straight out of the catechism; it requires a vital, personal response.

HOMILY, BUDAPEST, SEPTEMBER 12, 2021



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- How are your actions inspired by your faith?
- Is there something you feel called to do that you’ve been putting off?

Healing the Wound of Unforgiveness

Excerpts from *Seven Steps to Peace with Saint Alphonsus Liguori* by Fr. Paul J. Coury, CSsR

When we are wounded in a physical way, the first question the doctor always asks is how it happened. Part of the healing journey is acknowledging and explaining the event itself.

When we embrace the wound of unforgiveness, we take the time to look at the history of the wound. How did this happen? What are the events that surround the initial hurt? It might be necessary to feel again the grief, shock, or sorrow that connect you to this wound of unforgiveness. The wound is like a huge magnet that attracts to itself a history of darkness. There is criticism of the self and the other, there is blame, there is casting of people as villains and victims, there is anger—maybe hatred—and most often feelings of revenge.

As painful as this road is to review and to walk, it is a necessary step in the



process of healing. Look at the stepping stones that led to the event and that followed. Try not to allow the feelings trap you into a downward cycle of darkness. Do not blame yourself or the other.

How do you heal the unforgiveness and bring yourself to a sense of

wholeness? Place the matter into God's healing hands. If you find that anger and hurt still surround the images of unforgiveness, then you must replace that anger and hurt with images of love. When the event or person of your darkness comes into your mind, purposely surround them with a loving presence.

The second aspect of becoming a whole, healed person is to act with compassion toward others, especially those who have injured you in some way. Acting with compassion is one spiritual practice that all major religions promote. Outward compassion brings inner healing. At first this might feel very strange and difficult. The more you challenge yourself to take action, the easier the action will become, and you will be amazed at how quickly you will heal. †

Wisdom from Catholic UPDATE

From *"Laughing With the Saints"* by James Martin, SJ

The most joyful people are those closest to God. As the Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin said, "Joy is the most infallible sign of the presence of God." Joy has a somewhat disreputable reputation in the Church, though. And that's a tragedy not only because joy is necessary, but also because it has a distinguished history among the saints and spiritual masters as an essential element for spiritual health. When you meet someone truly in touch with God, isn't that person joyful? Think of the holy people in your life. Are they not full of the spirit of the Resurrection? Full of joy? †

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Holy God, help us to hear the teachings of Jesus, to believe the truth of the Gospel, and to live what we believe in our everyday lives. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

September 16–21

Monday, Sts. Cornelius and Cyprian:

1 Cor 11:17–26, 33 / Lk 7:1–10

Tuesday, Weekday:

1 Cor 12:12–14, 27–31a / Lk 7:11–17

Wednesday, Weekday:

1 Cor 12:31—13:13 / Lk 7:31–35

Thursday, Weekday:

1 Cor 15:1–11 / Lk 7:36–50


Friday, Sts. Andrew Kim Tae-gŏn,

Paul Chŏng Ha-sang, and companions:

1 Cor 15:12–20 / Lk 8:1–3

Saturday, St. Matthew:

Eph 4:1–7, 11–13 / Mt 9:9–13

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