

**Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time “C” Cycle October 2, 2016**

**Just over a year ago, almost everyone was focusing on the visit of Pope Francis to Philadelphia and the World Meeting of Families. His message was one of faith in God and the loving service which faith should bring about. He reached out to embrace babies, bless those afflicted with handicaps, and give hope to prison inmates. This faith in action has characterized Pope Francis since the beginning of his papacy.**

**Faith is the theme of today’s Scriptures. The Old Testament prophet Habakkuk, our first reading, laments, even complains that his Jewish brothers and sisters are suffering at the hands of their enemies, which happened largely because of their lack of faith and corrupt life-styles.**

**The Lord reassures Habakkuk telling him that the vision of restoration still has time to be fulfilled and that the prophet needs to write this down and promulgate it. He urges the people to keep faith and they will survive.**

**In the second reading, from Saint Paul’s second letter to Timothy, the apostle reminds his younger co-worker to stir into flame the gift of faith and ordination that he has received. This encouragement was given in the face of the persecution of Jesus’ disciples. The Lord has given to Timothy power, love, and self-control, gifts of the Holy Spirit to keep the faith and share it.**

**In the Gospel the apostles ask Jesus: “increase our faith!” The apostles apparently were not sure about how they could carry on the mission of Jesus as his co-workers. The Lord encourages them, telling them that even a little faith could accomplish much for them and for others. He uses the example of a tiny mustard seed which would grow into a large shrub.**

**Jesus continues to teach that faith leads to serving one another and all others in his name. Jesus himself tells us that he has come among us not to be served but to serve. He not only said this but he lived it by his teachings, healings, calling sinners to reform, and finally by dying on the cross to save all from our sins and to save us for an eternal life of happiness with God.**

**All of us, because we are here, have faith in God and faith in Jesus. Even if we think we have little faith, following the advice of Saint Paul to Timothy, we pray that the Lord will help us stir up this spark of faith into a blazing flame. We ask Jesus, as the apostles did, “increase our faith.” He will surely do that.**

**Faith is also expressed not only in prayer and worship, but also in how we live and how we relate to others. Faith is also expressed by living a good moral life, avoiding especially serious sin. Faith is expressed by helping others by kindness, consideration, compassion, and practical charity.**

**On this Respect Life Sunday, we express our faith by fostering reverence for all living beings, especially human life at every stage. Besides promoting respect for the pre-born and the elderly, we can show concern and offer practical support for those we encounter who are lonely, for widows and widowers, for single parents, the handicapped, the poor, and the sick in body, mind, and spirit.**

**Heeding the good example of Pope Francis, may we keep, live, share and, with the Lord’s grace, increase our rich Christian Catholic faith.**