

Years ago there was a story on CNN about a farmer in Illinois who was battling cancer and due to the treatments he was unable to bring in the acres of crop that he had planted in the spring. If the crop was not harvested, it would mean a loss of close to a hundred thousand dollars. The farmer and his family were worried about the situation; fearing they would lose everything. Then came a knock at their door; it was a neighboring farmer who was there to inform the gentleman that a team of about 50 people had come with a number of combines to harvest his fields for him. Imagine how relieved that farmer felt when he was given the word that the harvesting would be done. The neighbor insisted that his sickly neighbor stop worrying about the crop.

Faith can be defined as the trust put in the person who has given the word that everything will be taken care of. The amount of faith in that person isn't important. Whether that farmer trusted a little or a lot, the job got done. If his faith was as small as a mustard seed, he could still enjoy the gift he had been given. The gift is the key and the word of the giver is there for reassurance.

This is the way it is between us and God. As we heard in the gospel from Luke, if we even have faith as small as a mustard seed, we can still witness miracles in this life of ours. In the consideration of faith matters: the trust that we believers have in the person of Christ is the faith that gets us through even the worst of times and that is what makes us people of hope.

This gift to us from God doesn't magically take away all the troubles, hurts, and disappointments that we continually face in our world, just as that neighbor's gift of harvesting the fields didn't take away the cancer that was still ravaging the farmer's body.

As we come to this altar and celebrate the good gifts that God has spread before us, there is still a whole world of suffering also sharing this table. The struggle of watching our streets become battlefields, the gross injustice in the banking world, the feelings of grief and loss in the death of loved ones, the hard edge of terrorism and anxiety; even the struggles of pain and doubt will at times have us crying out like the prophet Habbakuk,

“Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife and clamorous discord. How long, O Lord?”

Faith will not get rid of suffering but it will get us through it as we lean on our Lord Jesus Christ.

St. Paul reminds us in his writings that, “Our lives are hidden in God with Christ.” Just because our life with Christ is hidden doesn’t mean that it is nonexistent. Jesus comes to us at the Eucharist and reminds us that he has set our lives in order through his cross, death, and resurrection, so that we in turn can trust in him despite what we sometimes see or feel in this human existence. In Christ our life is safe and that is something we can believe.

As Habbakuk reminds us, “the righteous live by their faith.” even if that faith is only the size of a mustard seed.