

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old received divine approval. By faith we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear.

Hebrews 11:1-3

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost +

On west side of South Bend, Indiana you will find St. Casmir's Church. It is our family parish and I want you to visit the church with me for a moment. Barbara married me in that church, our sons were baptized there, I celebrated my first Mass there and I buried our parents from that church.

It is typical of large older churches with the basilica shaped Sanctuary. A half circle and above the Altar and surrounding the sacred space are the images of the Apostles. Peter and Andrew, James and John, Paul and all the rest look down from that lofty perch.

I have often sat in that church and considered the beauty and gazed upon those images. Often I find myself think not about the Apostles we know well, but the others; Simon, Jude Bartholomew (A particular favorite of mine) Phillip and James. These Apostles we know only by name or by the oral history of the church which may or may not be completely correct.

And what the seventy others the Bible names as being sent by Jesus, where are their names and faces? These are those who faith is known by God, but their names and faces are known not well or know to us at all. They have one thing common with the Apostles and all who have gone before them and all who will follow. They are faithful and have fulfilled the work they were given to do.

Their faces and their names do not ring a Basilica Church, but their names are written in the Book of Life. Each of us is called to follow in their footsteps. And the question for us to consider is how are we capable of doing so?

I began with the passage from the Letter to the Hebrews. The author in that section is connecting the lives of the Patriarchs and others who have been faithful to Lord. This passage dismisses the notion of salvation by heredity. It is not important that one be born of the people, that is, a Jew. Rather, what is important is that when God called these people, they responded faithfully.

The Nature of Faith is a question for each generation to ponder and learn. The first faltering steps are when we begin to be aware of God and then struggle to do things which we think will build upon that faith.

Then comes the startling revelation, it may be in a sermon or Homily or it may be within our hearts that God chooses to reveal to us the truth. We can do nothing to approach the throne of Grace. We are not capable of redeeming ourselves. We are not independent beings who can choose to have faith; rather we are gifted by God with faith, for He calls all people to be His children.

Some respond and some are too busy to listen, to hear and to allow God to enter into their lives. Their lives are full enough, they are happy enough they have convinced themselves that they are the masters of the universe; they believe that they do not need God.

St. Paul teaches us that it is not within to live or to have faith. It is in God that live and move and have our being. It is God who gifts us with knowledge of His presence and it is God who will fill us with His Holy Spirit, if only we will be open to Him.

This is part of the message of the Gospel today. Jesus is again teaching of the coming of the Holy Ghost and what that gift will mean to the world and to those who know and love the Lord. To the world (Which is in the Bible a word that is used to indicate those who are not following the True and Living God). For the world it will mean judgment and conviction because of sin.

This understanding is that the Holy Ghost will descend according the Will of God so that we may in this world and in the world to come live in God's presence.

The work of the Spirit is to build up our faith, to lead us into truth and to allow us to understand what are to do and what are to avoid. It is for this reason that in this season of Easter the Epistles continue to remind us of right behavior.

The message is clear, with faith and with the gift of the Holy Spirit, we should amend our lives and conform our actions to those things which are life giving and avoid those which are death dealing.

In the time before the coming of the Christ man first walked alone. After the Covenant with Abraham walked man walked with sure knowledge of a God who wishes to Love His people and to loved by them.

God gave Moses the Law, but the Law kills and does not save us because we are incapable of following every tenant of the Law. And so the Law does not save, but convicts us of sin.

Then in a moment of time, the Christ of God came into the world He had created, to die or us and to rise again. Setting us free and after His ascension, God sent the Comforter, the Holy Ghost to be with us.

Our task is not to find a way to God our Father, we know the way and truth and the life to be the Lord, Jesus the Christ.

Our task is not to design or conceive actions which will earn our way to heaven; the Holy Spirit will guide us into right actions for righteousness sake.

Our task is to be aware, to be open and to allow God to rule our lives and tame our unruly desires.

This is what the Holy Men and Women of the Old Testament did, it is what the Apostles did and what all the disciples that have followed the Lord and loved him have done. It is what Jane Gordon Dunlop did.

You don't know, Jane Dunlop. Her name is inscribed on the cross that sits on our Altar. The inscription reads: To the Greater Glory of God in Loving Memory of Jane Gordon Dunlop – All Saints 1892.

But for Jane and for all those who have followed the Lord from this world to the next; inscriptions like that are unimportant. What was and is important to them is that their names are written in the Book of Life, for they have been open to the Lord and allowed the Holy Spirit to fill them.

May each of us, do the same.

AMEN