

Fr. Martin's Reflection – October 2, 2022

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Our readings at first glance may not seem very encouraging. Our first reading, from the prophet Habakkuk, opens with the cry of someone experiencing great suffering, **“How long, O Lord? I cry for help, but you do not listen! I cry out to you, “Violence!” but you do not intervene.”** Unfortunately, too many people have expressed such a cry, and before the crying has stopped, they have become angry with God, disappointed in God, and feel abandoned by God, which can lead to walking away from God. Then God spoke to the prophet and said, **“Write down the vision clearly upon the tablets, so that one can read it readily.”** So, what was the vision? It obviously was a vision of the future, a future that shows better times, a time when God will erase all suffering and pain. The prophet is told, **“If it delays, wait for it, it will surely come, it will not be late.”**

What is being said is, the suffering the people are experiencing is not from God. Before God's healing can begin, God must wait until we desire God's healing. God must wait until we invite God to heal us, God waits until our heart truly desires God, because if we don't genuinely desire God, or if our hearts are filled with bitterness and hatred, then God's healing is lost on us or possibly wasted. The response to our Psalm pretty much says as much, **“If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”** We see in Matthew 13:58 where Jesus could work no, or very few, miracles because of the people's lack of faith. God can't work any miracles for us or through us if we lack faith. Paul was conscious of the pressure God's people were under regarding their faith in Jesus. He encourages Timothy (2 Tim 1:6-8, 13-14) 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.”** Paul goes on to say, **“You are never to be ashamed of witnessing to the Lord, or ashamed of me for being his prisoner.”**

In our Gospel, Luke 17:5-10, the disciples ask Jesus to increase their faith. They possibly didn't get the answer they were hoping for when Jesus said to them, **“Were your faith the size of a mustard seed you could say to this mulberry tree, “Be uprooted and planted in the sea,” and it would obey you.”** What Jesus was saying to the disciples, take whatever faith you have and lean on it, build on it, believe in the faith you have and approach your God, because God can do amazing things even with the little faith we believe we have. Again, I feel the Psalm response says it best, **“If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”**

Dear friends, let our prayer be this week, “Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.”

Fr. Martin