Increase our faith • Breaking open the word

Readings

Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4
The just one, because of his faith, shall live.

2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14
For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control.

Luke 17:5-10
“If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.”

You can read the full text of this Sunday’s readings here:

Scriptures for the Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C

Reflection

Today’s first reading might sound a lot like what you hear on the news these days—people cry “violence” and are living in fear. At home, peaceful protests devolve into looting and destruction. Abroad, attacks on the innocent grip the people of Aleppo, Mexican priests are being kidnapped and slaughtered, and in North Korea Christians are being persecuted. We are told in the first reading to remain calm. To wait. To believe in God’s promise that things will be made well. When we look at the events in Charlotte in 2016 and other U.S. towns, we can see the application of the last line,

“The rash one has no integrity; but the just one, because of his faith, shall live.” The message of peace that was intended by some at the protest is drowned out by looters and attackers.

Our second reading reminds us of who we are—temples of the Holy Spirit “that dwells in us.” When God gave his spirit to us, “God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control.” We quite literally have it in is to be brave and to model self-control, even in the face of violence and when we are afraid.

In the Gospel, the apostles ask Jesus to increase their faith. As a response, Jesus tells them that they need to keep working; keep serving and to not be focused on a reward for it. We need to remember that everything we do for God is natural to us; everything we do for others is an expression of our being made in the image and likeness of God. When we stop worrying and just do our job of being Church (loving others), our faith *is* increased, because we see the difference that God can make through us—we can move mountains.

Break open the word with your family

Kids

Do you ever watch the news with your parents? How do you feel about what you are seeing? Say a prayer for those who are suffering.

Teens

What do you think of that line in Paul’s letter to Timothy, “For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control.”? If courage and self-control are from God, then where do you think feelings being afraid and out of control come from? How do you see evil using fear

and a lack of control to its advantage?

Adults

Are you afraid of the trends you are seeing in the world? What are you most afraid of? What gives you hope?

A little lectio

The ancient practice of prayerfully reflecting on bits of Scripture is known as *lectio divina*. Want to try it out with your family? Head over to Lectio Divina for Kids to find out how to adapt this prayer practice for your kids.

A little Bible study

Want to do a little Bible study with your kids? Here are some tips:

- During Ordinary Time, the Church pairs the Old Testament and New Testament readings in a way that each sheds light on the other. Ask your kids to look for the common theme connecting the two readings. (Sometimes it's obvious, sometimes it is subtle.) How does the "dialogue" between the readings help you understand them better?
- Get a New American Bible, Revised Edition, and take a look at the footnotes for these readings. How do they change your understanding of what is going on?
- Take a look at the context for the readings—what happens before, or after?
- Read the NABRE's introduction to the book of the Bible that the readings are taken from. How does that help you understand the readings?
- If you don't have a copy of the NABRE at home, you can view it online at the USCCB website at the Daily

Readings web page.

For even more resources for breaking open this Sunday's readings, head over to The Sunday Website.