

- The Quaker theologian, D. Elton Trueblood, once said that: ‘Faith is not belief without proof, but trust without reservation.’
- Our Gospel today gives us two wonderful examples of faith in the woman with the hemorrhage and Jairus, the synagogue official. In both we see people who trust unreservedly in our Lord’s goodness, mercy, and ability to heal.
- Yet with both Jairus and the woman with the hemorrhage we are given an indication that they had some fear, which in the spiritual life is the opposite of faith.
- We are told that the woman with the hemorrhage approached Jesus with fear and trembling, and after Jairus is told that his daughter is dead, Jesus tells him to not be afraid, but to have faith.
- But despite their fear, both Jairus and the woman with the hemorrhage reach out with faith to our Lord, which makes their faith all the more beautiful.
- Their faith in Christ is stronger than whatever fear they are experiencing, and in trusting Jesus without reservation they reap the rewards of faith: Jairus’ daughter is raised from the dead, and Jesus tells the woman: “Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction.”
- The *Catechism* teaches us that: “Faith is the theological virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that he has said and revealed to us, and that Holy Church proposes for our belief, because he is truth itself. By faith ‘man freely commits his entire self to God’” (CCC 1824).
- Faith, along with the virtues of hope and charity, is a gift that is implanted within us by God at our baptism. But at the same time, “faith is a personal act - the free response of the human person to the initiative of God who reveals Himself” (CCC 166).
- Faith is how we adhere to God; it’s how we grow in our relationship with the Lord. And yet faith does not act in a vacuum. Faith must be exercised with her sister virtues of hope and especially charity. As St. James tells us: “Faith without works is dead” (Jas 2:20).
- In other words, our faith can be lost! If we fail to practice our faith, if we fail to trust our Lord as we should, our faith will wane. If our faith wanes, we will not grow in virtue.
- It is not easy for man, wounded by sin, to maintain moral balance. Yet, Christ's gift of salvation offers us the grace necessary to persevere in the pursuit of the virtues.
- Therefore, everyone should always ask for the grace of light and strength, frequent the sacraments, cooperate with the Holy Spirit, and follow God’s calls to love what is good and shun evil if we wish to grow in faith, and thereby grow in holiness. (cf. CCC 1811).
- As Christians we must not only keep the faith and live on it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it, for faith is necessary for salvation (cf. CCC 1816).
- We hear this in the Gospel of Matthew, where Jesus tells us: "Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Mt 10:32-33).
- The one thing that undermines our faith the most is fear. Fear weakens our faith, thereby weakening our relationship with God, making it harder for us to be saved. When we live in fear rather than faith, we forfeit our Lord’s grace and are carried away by the cares of the world.

- Think of the story of St. Peter stepping out of the boat to walk on the water. Unlike the other apostles, Peter had the faith to get out of the boat and begin walking on the water. Unfortunately, he became frightened because of the stormy waves, and thus he began to sink.
- Peter's fear was his undoing in that moment, and so he fell prey to the stormy waters. And the same is true for us. If our faith in Jesus is not rock solid, or if we give in to fear, we, too, will fall prey to the storms of life.
- So the question before us is how do we strengthen our faith to overcome whatever fears plague us? Our answer can be found in the first epistle of John. St. John tells us that: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear" (I John 4:18).
- And so my friends, if we want to overcome fear and grow in faith, we must learn to love God with all our hearts, mind and strength. But at the same time we must also learn how much God loves us.
- We get a glimpse of the great love God has for us in the second reading. St. Paul tells us about the "gracious act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, for your sake He became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich."
- Paul's point, of course, is that God loves us so much that He gave up everything – even His very life – so that we might become the sons and daughters of God.
- And, of course, we see the great goodness and love of Jesus in the way He heals both the woman with the hemorrhage and the daughter of Jairus in today's Gospel.
- As followers of Christ we must live our lives firmly convinced of God's deep and abiding love for all of us – faithfully trusting that He will always do what is best for us.
- Considering the great suffering that we see in our world, perhaps it is easy for us to think that God is indifferent, that He doesn't care for us. Yet our readings today tell us differently. They tell us very clearly that God is love!
- Moreover, the sufferings we bear in this life are often the means God uses to strengthen us in faith, hope and love.
- Look around us, my friends. God constantly reveals Himself to us: in the beauty of creation, in the love we experience with our family and friends, in the way He providentially cares for all of our needs.
- We see God's indescribable love in the liturgy, in the gift of His Body and Blood in the Eucharist, and most especially in His Passion, death, and resurrection. Look at the crucifix! Could anyone but a loving God do so much for us?
- My dear friends, ask yourself what it is you fear in this life. What is it that keeps you from living your faith fully?
- Then examine all the ways that God shows His love to you and to all of us, and make the decision to love God more so that your faith will grow! Cast aside your fears and learn to trust God without reservation, for He is a good and gracious God, full of kindness and mercy.
- Pray for the grace to be strong in faith, and in all things act with the love of God in mind so that you may cast your fears away and receive that grace.