

- In our second reading from the letter to the Hebrews, we have that famous definition of faith: *“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for...the conviction of things not seen.”*
- What we hope for you all well know: eternal life with God in Heaven.
- We know this great existence is offered to us most of all because of the promises of Jesus in the Gospels...His divinity affirmed by the signs He accomplished fulfilling the prophecies of the past (just read the Servant Songs of Isaiah, for some), and by the miracles which are so widely attested in the writings of the apostles—things which could have only been accomplished by supernatural—above the mere material and natural—abilities.
- As Jesus tells us: *“If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works...”* (John 10:37-38 RSV)
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- Abraham is called the “our father in faith” because he believed the word of God and acted upon it.
- A true faith implies action in accord with that faith, which is belief.
- As the letter to the Hebrews continues, it says: *“By faith, Abraham obeyed...”*, *“...by faith he sojourned...”*. In other words, by faith, Abraham acted.
- Likewise, St. James tells us: *“Was not Abraham our father justified by works...You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by works...and he was called the friend of God. You see that a man is justified by works and NOT by faith alone.”* (James 2:21-24)
- Abraham followed God’s command...and thereby what God had promised was realized: Abraham’s descendants would become a great nation and virtually innumerable...not just the Israelites, but in all Christians as well, because Abraham is called “our father in

faith”...and thus we who believe are all of his descendants.
Billions of us.

- I often imagine Abraham looking down from Heaven and seeing the billions of Christians who live, have lived and will live...and exclaiming in wonder: “How God’s promises are indeed realized in unimaginable abundance!”...as will His promises to all His faithful—to us—will also be.

- Now Jesus continues the theme of last week—that our lives are much more than possessions and the material...and that our lives should be those of charity rather than of self-seeking.
- He tells us today: *“Sell your belongings and give alms. Provide money bags for yourselves that do not wear out, an inexhaustible treasure in heaven...For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.”*
- Because the good and resources that we have are simply seeds... seeds with which to grow virtue.
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- Now we can delay our charity...our forgiveness...our fidelity to God. In fact, let us wait!...wait until a month before our Lord comes, and then repent!
- Now...what day is that?...what month...what year, even?
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- Time. Precious time.
- By Jesus’ death...by Jesus’ love...He bought us precious time... time to work for the good...to forgive...to be charitable...to love God more and more...the God and Father who yearns for OUR love so desperately that He gave up His only begotten Son.

- As we hear in Psalm 81: *“O that my people would listen to me, that Israel would walk in my ways! I would soon subdue their enemies [Satan & his minions], and turn my hand against their foes...I would feed you with the finest of the wheat, and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.”* (Psalm 81:13-16)
- For as St. John tells us: *“In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins.”* (1John 4:10)
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- Jesus affirms for us today the theme of the book of Tobit: *“Give alms from your possessions...and do not let your eye begrudge the gift when you make it. Do not turn your face away from any poor man, and the face of God will not be turned away from you. (Tobit 4:7) It is better to give alms than to treasure up gold. For almsgiving delivers from death, and it will purge away every sin. Those who perform deeds of charity and of righteousness will have fullness of life...”* (Tobit 12:8-9)
- And for those who follow the obligation...the duty...of charity, Jesus assures us: *“Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world... Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.”* (Matthew 25:34-40)

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- There were three farmers who had a bountiful harvest.
 - The first farmer harvested much grain and gathered it all into his barn.
 - He loved to wade into the seed, running his hands through the seed and reveling in his abundance, congratulate himself on his wisdom and ability...but refusing to plant the grain...because to plant it would be to part with it.
 - But the seed rotted, and the mice and rats and thieves stole it all, until there was nothing left...not even to plant.

- The second farmer loved to eat his grain, and ordered his cook every day: “Cook me grain, that I may gorge myself upon it!”
- And to the poor outside his gate, he said: “Begone; I have nothing for you! YOU did not gather the grain; I did!”...and eventually he ate all his grain, and had nothing left...not even to plant.
- A third farmer harvested his grain, and called the poor to him: “Here...let us together drink and eat...and help me to plant grain, that we may continue to harvest”...and they planted and harvested together until there were no barns large enough to hold their abundance.

Reading 1

[Wis 18:6-9](#)

The night of the passover was known beforehand to our fathers,
that, with sure knowledge of the oaths in which they put their faith,
they might have courage.

Your people awaited the salvation of the just
and the destruction of their foes.

For when you punished our adversaries,
in this you glorified us whom you had summoned.

For in secret the holy children of the good were offering sacrifice
and putting into effect with one accord the divine institution.

[Ps 33:1, 12, 18-19, 20-22](#)

Responsorial Psalm

R. (12b) Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

Exult, you just, in the LORD;
praise from the upright is fitting.

Blessed the nation whose God is the LORD,
the people he has chosen for his own inheritance.

R. Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

See, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him,
upon those who hope for his kindness,
To deliver them from death
and preserve them in spite of famine.

R. Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

Our soul waits for the LORD,
who is our help and our shield.

May your kindness, O LORD, be upon us
who have put our hope in you.

R. Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

[Heb 11:1-2, 8-19](#) or [11:1-2, 8-12](#)

Reading 2

Brothers and sisters:

Faith is the realization of what is hoped for
and evidence of things not seen.

Because of it the ancients were well attested.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place
that he was to receive as an inheritance;
he went out, not knowing where he was to go.

By faith he sojourned in the promised land as in a foreign country,
dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the same promise;
for he was looking forward to the city with foundations,
whose architect and maker is God.

By faith he received power to generate,
even though he was past the normal age
—and Sarah herself was sterile—
for he thought that the one who had made the promise was
trustworthy.

So it was that there came forth from one man,
himself as good as dead,
descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky
and as countless as the sands on the seashore.

All these died in faith.

They did not receive what had been promised

but saw it and greeted it from afar

and acknowledged themselves to be strangers and aliens on earth,

for those who speak thus show that they are seeking a homeland.

If they had been thinking of the land from which they had come,
they would have had opportunity to return.

But now they desire a better homeland, a heavenly one.

Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God,
for he has prepared a city for them.

By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac,
and he who had received the promises was ready to offer his only son,
of whom it was said,

“Through Isaac descendants shall bear your name.”

He reasoned that God was able to raise even from the dead,
and he received Isaac back as a symbol.

or

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[Lk 12:32-48](#) or [12:35-40](#)

Gospel

Jesus said to his disciples:
“Do not be afraid any longer, little flock,
for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom.
Sell your belongings and give alms.
Provide money bags for yourselves that do not wear out,
an inexhaustible treasure in heaven
that no thief can reach nor moth destroy.
For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.

“Gird your loins and light your lamps
and be like servants who await their master’s return from a wedding,
ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks.
Blessed are those servants
whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival.
Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself,
have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them.
And should he come in the second or third watch
and find them prepared in this way,
blessed are those servants.
Be sure of this:
if the master of the house had known the hour
when the thief was coming,
he would not have let his house be broken into.
You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect,
the Son of Man will come.”

Then Peter said,
“Lord, is this parable meant for us or for everyone?”
And the Lord replied,
“Who, then, is the faithful and prudent steward
whom the master will put in charge of his servants
to distribute the food allowance at the proper time?
Blessed is that servant whom his master on arrival finds doing so.

Truly, I say to you, the master will put the servant
in charge of all his property.
But if that servant says to himself,
'My master is delayed in coming,'
and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants,
to eat and drink and get drunk,
then that servant's master will come
on an unexpected day and at an unknown hour
and will punish the servant severely
and assign him a place with the unfaithful.
That servant who knew his master's will
but did not make preparations nor act in accord with his will
shall be beaten severely;
and the servant who was ignorant of his master's will
but acted in a way deserving of a severe beating
shall be beaten only lightly.
Much will be required of the person entrusted with much,
and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more."