

## 27<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, CYCLE C

*Habakkuk 1: 2-3, 2:2-4 + Psalm 95 + 2 Timothy 1: 6-8, 13-14 + Luke 17: 5-10*

Holy Spirit Catholic Church: October 6, 2019

The prophet Habakkuk's lament rises up from our hearts today:

*"Destruction and violence are before me."*

Violence seems to be everywhere we look, so we cry out to God with the prophet, yet He seems not to hear nor to intervene.

The respect for the dignity of every life seems to diminish day by day.

There is the violence of abortion, an attack upon the weakest and most vulnerable lives.

There is the violence of suicide, especially the plague of overdosing on opioids.

There is the violence of euthanasia and capital punishment.

Mass shootings have turned places of worship into places of violence.

The fear of violence permeates the air we breathe wherever we are, for whether on the road or in a store or at work or at church or at school, we fear someone will pull out a gun and start shooting away.

Then there is the violence done to those fleeing violence in their homelands,

Children are separated from their parents, and those looking for refuge are refused entry into our land and sent back into places much more violent than our own land.

Destruction and violence are before us, everywhere we look, even in our Catholic Church.

Clergy have abused children and those over them seem to have looked the other way, ruining young lives in many ways, especially impacting their relationship with God.

Habakkuk's lament is our cry: *"Why do you let me ruin, why must I look at misery?"*

Yet, there is more than physical violence, for today more than ever before, words are used as weapons harm others and destroy them.

From the president down to the lowliest citizen,

words are used to rip apart the reputation of others and to dehumanize them.

Social media has become a battleground with words used as weapons.

Faced with destruction and violence, we feel overwhelmed, even paralyzed. What to do? How to live in such a world?

So, we join those first disciples in their cry to the Lord, “*Increase our faith.*”  
In such a violent time, we feel the need for more faith---give us more, Lord.

The reply of the Lord Jesus shocks us---if you had the tiniest bit of faith you could move that which seems unmovable, you could change that which seems unchangeable.  
In other words, the Lord Jesus is saying is not a matter of having more faith,  
but acting on the faith we have been given.

For we have been given a “*spirit of power and love and self-control.*”  
The Holy Spirit is more than enough, energizing us with divine power  
to love in the face of hatred and to control our initial response to any sort of violence,  
which is to strike back in kind.  
The mustard seed Spirit planted in us at baptism, the great gift of faith given to us,  
is more than enough.  
How is that possible?

Because the Spirit leads us into a relationship with the Prince of Peace.  
By surrendering our lives to Him, the Savior of the World,  
we find strength to love and live in a way previously unimaginable.

What we discover is that faith is **not “some-thing”** we have or don’t have  
or don’t have enough of, but rather a **relationship** with the Lord of Life.  
Each day He invites us to follow him, to go where he leads,  
to be nourished by the gift of his words and presence, his very life given to us.  
We “grow” in faith by growing in our relationship with Jesus.

We learn from Him that it is the little deeds of love and mercy which change the world.  
It is the daily deeds of kindness and compassion which transform the face of the earth.

This past Tuesday the Church celebrated the feast day of St. Therese of Lisieux,  
often called the “Little Flower.”  
Early in her life she had determined she wished to be a saint,  
and she devised her own method, which she called “the Little Way.”  
It was an effort to respond with love to each chore, encounter, or petty insult  
of her daily life.  
She believed that by the practice of this discipline  
she could take the ordinary business of life and convert it into the fuel of holiness.  
And by the small, molecular influence of each action and intention,  
she might transform the world.

Ironically, through her Little Way, this cloistered Carmelite nun pointed a way to lay holiness, a spiritual method that could be practiced by anyone in every situation of life.

This “little way” of faith is a way to respect life at every moment and in every situation. It is a choosing to respect the life of the person in front of me right now by choosing to love them, with the Lord’s help. That can be by an encouraging word or a challenge to change, by a kind deed or by a few short phrases:  
“I was wrong. I’m sorry. Please forgive me.”

It is a choice in every encounter to move from hardness of heart to a soft, supple heart, which the Holy Spirit can then flow through into the world.

It is a movement, with the Spirit’s help, to receive every life as a gift, and to accept and respect the gift of our own life as well.

*Fr. Joseph A. Jacobi*