

A Little Goes a Long Way

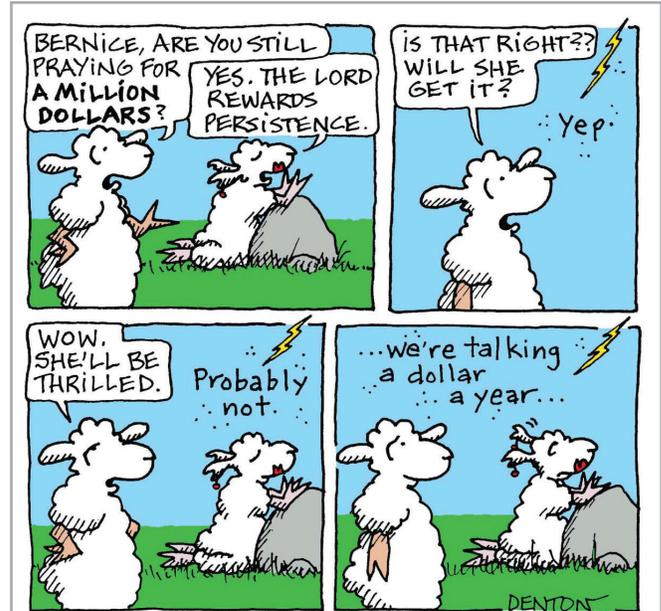
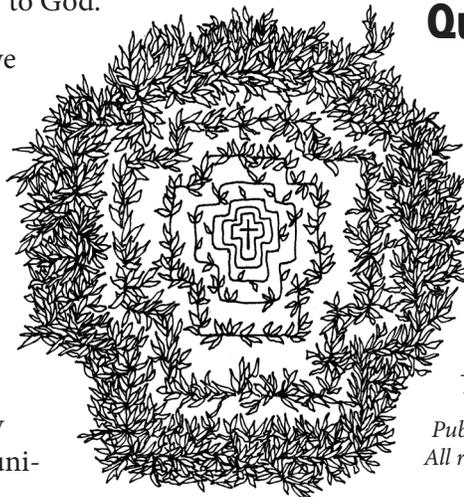
This Week's Readings at Mass

- ▶ Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4 - Habakkuk's complaint
- ▶ 2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14 - Exhortation to faithfulness
- ▶ Luke 17:5-10 - Sayings on the requirements of faith

Although all three readings today seem only superficially related, each implores the readers to persevere with confidence through times of trial. The prophet Habakkuk cries out to God for deliverance in a time of crisis. God responds, not with an immediate rescue, but with a promise that he will ultimately save “the just one.” Likewise, St. Paul encourages Timothy to live from the spirit of power, love, and self-control rather than falling back into cowardice. In the Gospel, Jesus reminds the apostles that even a little faith will suffice to do great things. Taken together, the scriptures for the day offer consolation and strength for everyone struggling with the challenges of daily discipleship in an imperfect world.

As they travel with Jesus on the road to Jerusalem, the apostles acknowledge to Jesus that they don't think they have enough faith. Instead of berating them for this, Jesus surprises them with the assurance that even a tiny amount of faith is enough to work miracles. If faith the size of a mustard seed is enough to uproot a mulberry tree, Jesus' followers won't have any excuses for why they can't do great things in his name. In the meantime, while they are praying for greater faith, the disciples can do what they can with what they have. With faith the size of a mustard seed a person can plow, tend sheep, or serve at table and all of those actions can give glory to God.

As St. Teresa of Calcutta wrote, we all have “the opportunity to become holy through the works of love that we do because holiness is not the luxury of the few. It is a very simple duty for you, for me—you in your position, in your work, and I and others, each one of us in the work” (*Where There Is Love, There Is God*). How many times do Christians miss opportuni-



© Jean Denton flock.pastoralcenter.com

“For the vision still has its time, presses on to fulfillment, and will not disappoint.”

Sheepish Question:

How would I describe the scale of my faith?

ties to serve God because the opportunities seem so trivial or commonplace? Or how many times do we not even attempt to do amazing things because we assume we don't have what it takes to make a difference? Jesus doesn't want excuses for not trying.

The second half of the reading changes the subject to the expectations of faithful disciples. We are called to be like servants, going diligently about our work without the expectation of reward (although Jesus promises a reward in other parts of the Gospels). He wants his disciples' motives to be pure—do the work of God because it is right and good, not because it will profit us personally.

Questions of the Week

- 1 When have you felt like your faith wasn't enough? When did you find that a small amount of faith went a long way?
- 2 Describe someone you know or have heard of who was able to do great things because of their faith.

Word of the Week • Copyright © 2019 Ann Naffziger.
Published by the Pastoral Center / PastoralCenter.com.
All rights reserved.