

## Scripture Reading

### A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews (Hebrews 11:6)

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for anyone who approaches God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

### Reflection – Can we rise up to the challenge when our faith is sorely tested?

**Faith is a precious, free gift from God.** God dearly wishes to have all His children acknowledge Him, love Him and pay homage to Him, especially after all He has done for us. God gives His children the gift of faith at various stages of their earthly lives. Some may receive it soon after birth at infant Baptism. Others may receive it later in life. Whatever the time, the availability of God's graces means that no one is "disadvantaged" when faith is received later than earlier. The creation of God from the invisible electron to the whole universe is such that it bears the imprint of some of the beauty, purity, creativity, nobility, orderliness, ingenuity of the Creator so that in perceiving this, one may also acknowledge the existence of the Creator Himself. Those without faith can seek and find God when they open their heart in humility to seek and accept the Eternal Truth which is God Himself. This is the promise of God (cf. Matthew 7:7, Isaiah 45:19) Who greatly desires everyone to know the Truth.

**True faith empowers us to simply trust in God.** *By faith, man completely submits his intellect and his will to God (CCC143).* In submitting our intellect, we believe, without a doubt, whatever is revealed to us by God even if we do not fully understand the divine doctrine. Even if we do not see or feel His presence, we firmly believe in the existence of God. We are led by faith and not by our senses (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:7). In submitting our will to God, we firmly trust that what He determines for us in His divine will is for our temporal and eternal good, and we will, with all our strength, strive to do what He calls us to do rather than to follow the dictates of our own heart and mind. *With his whole being man gives his assent to God the revealer (CCC143).* Faith comprises an act of assent on our part in response to God's revelation of the truth and in cooperation with His grace. Faith opens to us the reality and the truth that we are the creatures of God, and that the whole world should revolve around God Who should be accorded dominion over all hearts and minds. Thus, in faith, we let God be God, and place all our trust in Him.

**True faith empowers us to be obedient to God's commands even in the face of adversity.** To obey God's commandments in good times is not difficult but in times of adversity, it becomes a great challenge. God gives no exception of exemption from any of His commandments. God does not want us to tamper and water down His teachings and commandments but gives every grace to empower us to fulfill what He commands. God gives us great examples to inspire us and to emulate. The best example is God's own Son, Jesus Christ, Who is obedient to the commands of God even unto shameful death on the Cross. Our Blessed Mother Mary was obedient even at the risk of being stoned to death. Abraham did not spare his son when God demanded a burnt sacrifice of Isaac. The young men Daniel and his friends unconditionally remained in their allegiance to God and steadfastly refused to worship an alien statue even at the expense of being burned to death (cf. Daniel 3).

**True faith empowers us to be obedient without conditions, and to let God be God.** The many heroes of our faith remained in obedience to God even in the face of persecution or death without asking for any pre-condition. They were not sinless or perfect people but they treasured their faith and were committed to remain true to the Truth in whatever circumstances. In the time of testing, they depended on God and not on themselves, put their trust in God, and let God be God. They preferred a painful death than to deny God or break His commandments. God did the rest. God was not encumbered, and He brought into play His mighty power into such situations, bringing glory to Himself and those who adhered to Him till the end.

**Conversation with Jesus:** Precious Lord, thank You for the priceless gift of faith. Faith opens up to me the truth of where I come from, where I am going and how I can get there. It gives meaning and purpose to my life. Faith assures me of the bright eternity which awaits me because of the glorious, eternal inheritance God our Heavenly Father has prepared for me. Faith tells me I am on pilgrimage through this earth which is a testing place for my final destination in heaven, my true home. Though the testing may become rigorous at times, You are with me always as You promised (cf. Matthew 28:20). No matter how bad the situation may look, You are always in full control. Nothing happens without Your allowing it. Therefore, I can accept all things that happen to me for it is You Who willed it. Through Your divine power, You can turn all things into our good (cf. Romans 8:28). In times of need, help me focus on Your Presence and to depend on You so that I, like St Peter, can walk on the rough waters of the stormy sea. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me to have an unshakeable faith like yours! Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. [www.twohearts.hk](http://www.twohearts.hk)