

The 27th Sunday of Ordinary Time — October 6, 2019

The 1st Reading today is a pretty powerful experience of a prophet's life and journey. The prophet Habakkuk lived around 700 B.C. and preached to the people of Israel in the Southern territory, which was the Kingdom of Judah. Today this is the territory of Israel and Palestine. While the book of the prophet Habakkuk is a mere 56 verses, it is a very powerful story because he deals with very bold issues some of the very same issues we are dealing with 2,700 years later. It is really worth a closer look.

In the 1st Chapter, he is dealing with the issues of Good and Evil. Why do evil people appear to thrive in our world ? In the 2nd Chapter, he is dealing with God's response to the questions he has. In the 3rd chapter, he is offering a prayer of praise to God for the understanding he is receiving from God in response to his questions.

So we look at the text : It is as you will see an attempt to summarize chapters 1 & 2. "How long O Lord ? I cry for help but you do not listen ! I cry out to you 'Violence' ! But you do not intervene. Why do you let me see ruin? Why must I look at misery ? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife and clamorous discord."

Wow! How powerful the same kinds of questions we are asking God everyday. This was a bold prophet — asking God, questioning God ! What is your problem ? Surely you see all that is going on Why are you not doing something about it ?

Why do you stand idly by while our people (The People of Israel) are being attacked by one enemy after another ? Our country, our Nation, is being torn apartdo you not care ?

All these years later, we are dealing with the same question !
Do you really not care about where our world is headed ? The way
the question was asked only a little over a week ago in our
discussion group was: If God is Eternal, and knows everything
why did He allow, or permit, that father to be born, who abused his
6 year-old daughter and had done so over much of her life ? Do
you not care O God ? Wow ! that is the Eternal question the
forever question in our lives but we usually just address the
question when such maladies come into view, or come very close
to us in a personal way. Then, I remember 'the answer' or at least
the answer I have been given most of my life "DON'T QUESTION
GOD !!!!! Did you have that answer also ?

Please tell me How am I possibly going to have a relationship
with somebody whom I cannot question about the most important
and critical things in my life ?

Why are we not constantly working on that question with Him ?
Fear ? It has got to be at the very core of our being. Who is this
God that I have a relationship with? Is he really uncaring,
uninterested ?

Here is a piece of the answer the text moves to chapter 2
God's response

“ The Lord answered me and said : ‘Write down the vision clearly
upon tablets, so that one can read it readily. For the vision still has
its time, presses onto fulfillment, and will not disappoint; if it
delays, wait for it, it will surely come, it will not be late.’”

Wow ! Powerful ‘The vision’ whose vision is it ? Mine
His Ours A big question.

What is His Vision for us ?

In the bulletin today, you will read a statement which represents, the Building Committee, the Capital Campaign Committee, and the Senior Leadership Team. It is a simple statement, and it took a lot of back and forth discussion to put it together and reach agreement. I would now like to address that statement. We are completely stuck in this building process that we set out to accomplish. Our potential costs are projected way over the budget we agreed upon. Naturally, all sorts of questions arise as a result of this. I would like to try and give you some of the basic answers to the questions that arise some of which have been asked already.

Here are the primary reasons for such increase in costs :

- a.) The scope of work requested since the beginning has increased significantly from our basic conceptual drawings. We have attempted to include recommendations from a variety of sources within our parish membership.
- b.) We have had to incorporate a number of issues related to code compliance, that were not foreseen at the outset.
- c.) We have had to deal with issues regarding the anchoring of new construction to the old, and the costs related to that to ensure a firm foundation, as well as a completely secure building for many years to come.
- d.) We have issues of demolition and dirt work, which are pretty significant.
- e.) We have the additional cost of extras that have been added in order to make this a beautiful building that we would all be proud of.
- f.) The issues of Demolition, and dirt work were also very significant.

The next question that pretty naturally arises is :

“ Who is to Blame?” Surely somebody should have seen this coming! I am that person ! I am responsible for this ! I am not treating it lightly in any way. I have had sleepless nights and great stress over it. But I am the one responsible.

As your pastor, I invited you to embark on this journey with us, to pledge your money and support. I made an agreement with you on the very best knowledge that I had that we could accomplish this task on a budget of \$4.5 -5.0 million. I am not able to follow through on that commitment and I am profoundly sorry.

I was shocked during the latter part of my vacation in Ireland, when I received an email with the current projected costs. I know the members of our committee are also shocked, and I have no doubt you are also shocked.

So where are we? We had a meeting of all engaged parties last Sunday afternoon from 1:00 -3:00 p.m. We don't have the answers, because we haven't even addressed all the questions. We are looking at all other options, and we ask your patience with us while we attempt to figure out the 2 major questions:

What do we want to do ?

What is it that God wants us to do ?

In other words, as the Lord said to the prophet, “Write down the Vision ? What is our Vision ? Do we have a singular Vision or multiple Visions ?

We would like to give you a report on our deliberations at the end of the month..... the weekend of November 2/3 ...I am not saying we will have a solution, but we will provide you the benefit of our deliberations. At this point we want to be clear with you about our situation, and what is happening. We would be grateful to hear

your thoughts and reflections, in this process. We will continue to pray and to work for a solution.

In the words of today's Gospel, we pray : Lord increase our faith !