

Third Sunday of the Assumption – Having Faith

*Delivered by Rev. Fr. Ghevond Ajamian
St. Sarkis Armenian Church, Carrollton, TX
August 27, 2017
Gospel Reading: Mark 4:35-41*

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

There was once a priest and a soap maker walking together. The soap maker said to the priest, “What good is our faith? Do you see all the misfortunes and pain in the world? No one knows what is good, true or just anymore. There is no more studying of the scriptures. There is no more wisdom in the preachers. The people don’t even pay attention to the warnings of the prophets. If our faith is really true, then why is everything this awful?”

The priest did not answer, but continued to walk with the soap maker. On their way they came upon a dirty stream in which a filthy child was playing. The priest said, “Do you see that child? You say that soap helps clean people of dirt, but what good is it if that child has all the soap in the world and yet he remains dirty? Now, does soap really help?”

The soap maker interjected, “Soap cannot help if you do not use it!” To which the priest smiled and said, “This is very true. The same is with faith. It does not help you if throughout your entire life, every day you do not profess and practice it”.

As we hear, soap must be used in order for it to work and the same is true with faith. Faith is not a verbal statement or psychological feeling that we keep in our minds and hearts, but something we are constantly using and expressing. Like language and our muscles, if we do not use it, we lose it.

Faith is very similar to our muscles and exercise because, in order for our muscles to grow, we must exercise and when we exercise, our muscles are ripped and torn. After that we replenish ourselves with carbohydrates and proteins and then our muscles grow and are strengthened. Likewise, we must rip and tear our egos, pride and our beings and replenish our souls with the Bible, the Church Fathers, Holy Communion, the sacraments, prayer, fasting and caring for the less fortunate. When we do this, our faith grows strong and then we are able to withstand the storms of life, like we hear in today’s Gospel reading.

Today we heard how Jesus and His disciples were crossing a lake and a storm arose. The winds were so strong and the waves so great that the boat was about to sink. When the disciples, full of fear, turn to Christ, they see Him sleeping on a pillow in the back of the

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boat. They wake Him up and say, “Teacher, don’t you care we are going to perish?” he immediately stood up and silenced the winds and calmed the waves and there was peace. He said, “Where is your faith?” and they were all amazed that even nature obeys His commands.

We see that just because they had Jesus Christ with them, it did not mean that everything was going to be fine, nor that it was enough to calm the storm. Only when they woke Him and “used” Him did things change. How many of us have faith but don’t put it to work? How many of us have faith sleeping in our hearts and needs to be woken up? How many of us ask: how do I put my faith into action?

Some think we have to study the Bible every waking minute, while others think they need to preach and teach the Gospel from the rooftops. Still others think that we all have to go to seminary and become priests. In reality, the answer to how can we put our faith into action can be summed up in one word: love.

We must have love for each other, love for God and love for ourselves. This love encompasses and includes respect, peace and sacrifice. For St. Paul reminds us, “If I have such faith as to move mountains, but have not love, it is worth nothing.” Love is a demonstration of our faith and when we demonstrate our faith (through love) our faith grows in size and strength.

Let us take our faith, put it into action and show the world, through love, that our faith is a living, breathing, active part of our lives.

Amen.