

FAITH IN ACTION/ ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY (OPT. MEMORIAL): WEDNESDAY, 17 NOVEMBER, 2021, WEEK 33, YEAR I.

2 MACCABEES 7:1, 20-31; PSALM 17; LUKE 19:11-28

I like to make a subjective division of faith. We have what I like to call practical faith and then we have theoretical faith, just as we have practical atheists and theoretical atheists. Theoretical faith is to assent to a body of propositions without allowing it to affect how we live. The devil has this kind of faith. He believes in God and he believes all we believe about God and trembles and yet he remains a devil. This belief doesn't change the devil (James 2:19-20).

Practical faith is to live in a particular way and undertake particular tasks because of what we believe. It is allowing our faith to shape our lives. It is to move beyond profession to vision, to conduct, to decision, to action.

A good example of practical faith is in today's First Reading. We have a woman whose faith in God, in the resurrection, in eternal life, in the hope of the righteous, was strong enough to make her withstand the martyrdom of her seven children.

The question today is, in what ways has my faith shaped my life, my vision, my relationship with others, my decisions, my responses to situations, my management of crises, my ambition, my values and conduct?

Let me be more practical - how can we say we believe that sin makes us enemies of God, that its wage is eternal death, that Jesus died for our sins and yet continue in sin or living in the guilt of sin?

How can we claim to believe in final judgement and yet live our lives as if we won't be accountable?

How can we claim that God is love and we are children of God and yet we are unloving to others?

How can we claim that our God is omniscient and omnipotent and whatever He permits is for a reason and yet we worry ourselves to death when things don't go our way?

Why do we claim that we are created in God's image and likeness and treat others with contempt and hatred?

How can we claim that prayer changes things and yet when we have a problem, it doesn't occur to us to pray about it?

Why do we claim we believe in the resurrection and the reward of the righteous and yet we are so scared of death and we respond to the death of our departed ones as if they are lost and there is no hope of seeing them again?

Today's Gospel tells the story of a man who left talents for his servants whilst he went away to become a king. One of the servants put away his talent and didn't utilise it. A faith that doesn't change our lives is like a talent kept aside and unused.

Today is the optional memorial of St. Elizabeth of Hungary.

She was a daughter of the King of Hungary. She was given in marriage to Ludwig, the Landgrave of Thuringia, by whom she had three children. She frequently meditated on heavenly things and when her husband died, she embraced poverty and built a hospice in which she spent the rest of her life caring for the sick herself.

In St. Elizabeth, we see how faith translates to action and we see a perfect example of practical faith, a faith that transforms what we do and how we see others and the world.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary... Pray for us.