

CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time | For Sunday, August 7, 2022

Less Stress, More Faith

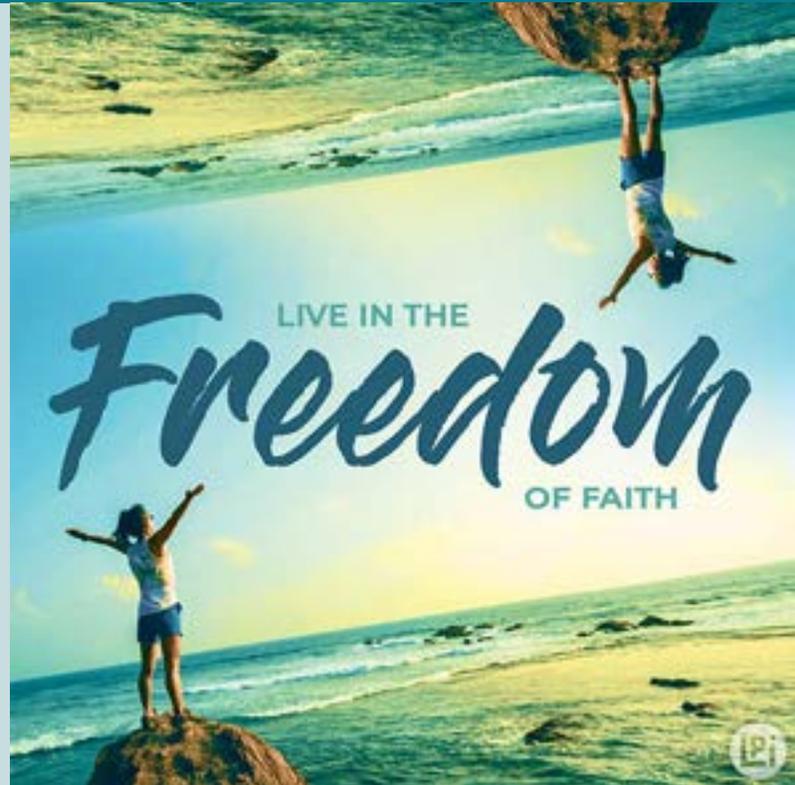
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Wisdom 18:6-9

Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19

or Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-12

Luke 12:32-48



Faith helps us overcome many of the anxieties of daily life.

As a society, we are experiencing an epidemic of stress. Keeping up with the demands of life has worn us out. [Many of us are getting much less sleep than we need](#). This heightened stress takes a toll on our bodies making our blood pressure soar. We overeat and use alcohol to compensate for the pressure we feel. As we close in on ourselves, we become more isolated until we find ourselves trapped in a prison of fear.

How different our life is when we put God at the center of it! Jesus promised those who follow him that his yoke would be easy and his burden light ([Mt 11:30](#)). Those who live according to his teaching are no longer burdened by having to live up to the world's unrealistic expectations. We no longer measure ourselves against what others have but against the word of a merciful God who knows and loves us. We who follow Jesus live in the freedom of faith.

[Today's second reading](#) from the letter to the Hebrews focuses on what faith means in the life of the believer. Faith is more than believing that God exists. As Saint James tells us, even the devil believes in God ([James 2:19](#)). Rather the faith that transforms and saves us is the trust that God's promises to us will be fulfilled. It means believing God and His word

even when our instincts tell us something different or the people around us are making different choices. It means believing God's word so deeply and so earnestly that we pattern every aspect of our lives according to it. We give food to the hungry because Jesus tells us we must. And we bite our tongue rather than spread gossip because it is what Jesus expects of us. We make these choices not because they are easy nor because people will appreciate us for it. Very often, the opposite is true. Rather we act with love and mercy because we hold onto God's promise that He will reward our good deeds. We make these choices out of faith.

In today's gospel reading, Jesus gives us an important example as to how we are to exercise our faith. As believers, we have an active expectation that Jesus will come again. This is the real important difference between those who believe and those who do not. Those who live without faith act as if this world is all there is. Their focus is on accumulating possessions and experiencing as much pleasure as possible. Sacrifice, giving to others, and patience mean nothing to them because they are living only for today. However, they live in fear because all these material things they cling to so dearly can easily be taken away from them.

Those of us who enjoy the gift of faith have an altogether different outlook. We know that this world and its pleasures are passing away. Our hope is set not on what this world can give us but on the eternal life promised to us by our Savior. We still need to work, to support our families and to prepare for the future, but we do so in trust knowing that God will provide for us. And if hardship or misfortune should come our way, we endure it with patience knowing that God is at our side and trusting that He will make all things work for our good. It is not an easy way to live, but it is a more fulfilling and happier life than this world can give. And it is ours if we stake our lives on God's promise.

Douglas Sousa

PRAYER

Eternal, Holy God,
I come to you burdened
With worries, fears, doubts, and troubles.
Calm and quiet me with peace of mind.
Empty me of the anxiety that disturbs me,
Of the concerns that weigh heavy on my heart.
Loosen my grip on the disappointments
And grievances I hold on to so tightly.
Release me from the pain of past hurts,
Of present anger and tension,
Of future fears.
Sometimes it's too much for me, Lord -
Too many demands and problems -
Too much sadness, suffering, and stress.
Renew me spiritually and emotionally.
Give me new strength, hope, and confidence.
Prepare me to meet the constant struggles of
Daily life with a deeper faith and trust in you.
Let your love set me free...
For peace, for joy, for grace, for life, for others...
Forever. Amen

(Capuchin Franciscan Friars)