

*Archdiocese of Dublin ~ Autumn Liturgy Gathering 2013*

**Luke's Story of Faith in the Sundays of October**

*Séamus O'Connell (Maynooth College) — September 27, 2013*

Word and Eucharist are so deeply bound together that we cannot understand one without the other ... The Eucharist opens us to an understanding of Scripture, just as Scripture for its part illumines and explains the mystery of the Eucharist.

Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Exhortation *Verbum Domini* [2010], §55

*1. By Way of Beginning: the FOUNDATION — Gospels as GOOD NEWS—Three Keys*

KEY 1. The gospels are good news, not good advice! (N.T. Wright)

Example: "Mam, I'm pregnant!"

- Good Advice Response: Are you taking your Folic Acid?
- Good News Response: \_\_\_\_\_

Key Questions: Where is the good news in this passage?

For WHOM is this passage good news?

KEY 2: Reading the gospels is primarily *Reading for TRANSFORMATION*, not *Reading for Information*

In Liturgy it is the repetition of the pattern, a ritualised form, that moulds people's lives as a community of faith. This is precisely what happens with the reading or proclamation of Scripture. We do not read Scripture to find out about what we don't know or have forgotten but rather to let the *pattern of the biblical story* to continue to form us.

John F. Baldovin SJ, "The Bible and the Liturgy," *Catechumenate* 11 (1989): 3

Faith Reading = Transformation focus; Agnostic Reading = Information focus

*Key Question:* what *hope* (or consolation, wisdom) does this text evoke?

KEY 3: Gospels are community texts: they written to read over and over again.

*Insight:* most gospel passages only begin truly to speak after listening to them for a long time

*Insight:* we learn how to open the gospels from others who have opened the gospels

*Key Question:* with whom might I read on a regular basis?

*2 More than Believing—Luke's Story of Faith*

*2.0 What faith is and what is not!*

Faith is a personal act—the free response of the human person to the initiative of God who reveals himself. But faith is not an isolated act. No one can believe alone, just as no one can live alone. You have not given yourself faith as you have not given yourself life. The believer has received faith from others and needs to hand it on to others. Our love for Jesus and for our neighbour impels us to speak to others about our faith. ... I cannot believe without being carried by the faith of others, and by my faith I help support others in the faith.

*(Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC] §166)*

## 2.1 Faith is more than Believing: Listening to Saint Paul

For through the law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God.

I have been crucified with Christ;

and it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me.

And the life I now live in the flesh

I live by the faith of [in] the Son of God,

who loved me, and gave himself for me.

(Galatians 2:19–20)

[Gal 2:20 is] the only place where Paul speaks of Christ loving him .... [and] the passage provides a vivid example of Christ's faith: he handed himself over for others.

Frank J. Matera, *Galatians* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992), 94

## 3 October 8 Faith Growing ~ Faith and Service

(Luke 17:5–10)

The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!' The Lord replied, 'If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea", and it would obey you.

'Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from ploughing or tending sheep in the field, "Come here at once and take your place at the table"? Would you not rather say to him, "Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink"? Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, "We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!"

- What is a parable?

*At its simplest the parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought,* (C.H. Dodd in 1935)

- How small is a mustard seed?
- What's the issue? What's at stake?
- For whom is this parable GOOD NEWS?

## 4 October 15 — The Faith of the Leper — The Fruit of Faith

(Luke 17:11–19)

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him.

Keeping their distance, they called out, saying, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!'

When he saw them, he said to them, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.'

And as they went, they were made clean.

Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice.

He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. He was a Samaritan.

Then Jesus asked, 'Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they?'

Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?'

Then he said to him, 'Get up and go on your way; your faith has saved you'

- Location! Location! Location! Where does this story occur?
- What HAPPENS in this story?
- What request do the lepers make? • How do they respond?

- How does the Samaritan respond?
- In this story, the leper has faith. What do the other nine have?
- What does the Lord see that he recognizes as faith?
- For whom is this story GOOD NEWS?

5 October 22 (Mission Sunday) — *The Unjust Judge* — *Faith and Perseverance* (Luke 18:1–8)

Jesus told [his disciples] a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said,  
 ‘In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying,  
 “Grant me justice against my opponent.”  
 For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, “Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.”’  
 And the Lord said, ‘Listen to what the unjust judge says.  
 And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night?  
 Will he delay long in helping them?  
 I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them.  
 And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?’

- This is a parable: where is its strangeness?
- In the Bible, what have the Widow, the Stranger, and the Orphan in common?
- What quality does the woman possess? • What does this tell us about faith?
- How does ‘the mustard seed’ cast light on this story?
- For whom is this story GOOD NEWS?

6 October 29 *The Pharisee and the Publican*— *RECOGNIZING faith*—*Keeping Faith* (Luke 18:9–14)

Jesus told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were justified (righteous) and regarded others with contempt:  
 ‘Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax-collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus,  
 “God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax-collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.”  
 But the tax-collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!”  
 I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled,  
 but all who humble themselves will be exalted.’

- Faith is also a reality in this story, even if it’s not mentioned. In the light of the three previous gospel stories, who has faith?
- Which character makes all the difference? • For whom is this story GOOD NEWS?

7 *Faith as an Ongoing Reality*

To fulfill the true meaning of the sacrament, children must later be formed in the faith in which they have been baptized. ... Christian formation, which is their due, seeks to lead them gradually to learn God’s plan in Christ (GIRBC §3)