**Faith Found in Love**

Based on [Luke 18:31-43](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Lk18.31-43)

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Quinquagesima

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The topic for today’s homily is faith demonstrated in love. In the epistle, St. Paul says faith without love is a noisy gong. Samuel records how God looks not at appearances, but the heart. Today, happens to be the commemoration of St. Valentine, we are going to consider how faith--the saving virtue of the christian--is not only shown in acts of love, but tested by them...and how faith is not your own doing, but the gift of God.

In today’s gospel, Jesus was passing by and a blind man cried out to him for mercy. This blind man shows faith. But his faith was rebuked by those who stood in front of him. Like the disciples when they rebuked the children for drawing near to Jesus, or the Pharisees when they rebuked the crowds on Palm Sunday--those in the front of the crowd scold the blind man for appealing to the messiah, for seeking his mercy. These scenes teach us that some will attempt to hush those who call out to Christ in faith--that expressions of faith in Christ will be met with scowling and disdain in the world. It is in this opposition that faith is tested and found true.

St. Valentine was a martyr who was imprisoned for his faith around AD 270. The day of his execution, he left a note of encouragement for a child of his jailer written on an irregularly shaped piece of paper...a Valentine card. There could be no doubt that St. Valentine had true faith, he acted on in, in love, on the very day he was to be executed for it.

It was only in the following century--after Christianity became legal--that the church had to start thinking about whether someone had true faith. Before that there were no false christians, because only true believers confess the faith to their own peril.

Faith is tested throughout the scriptures and throughout our lives. Faith needs exercise, and it is exercised by adversity, not peace. Whether it be a rebuking from the world for calling upon Jesus, or something else, daily, God gives us chances to rely on his promises over against those who are opposed to letting his kingdom come.

Faith is tested in love, but that love is nothing we can boast about. It comes from faith, and faith is not your own doing, but is a gift from God. Consider the passion prediction Jesus spoke to his disciples...

31 And taking the twelve, he said to them, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. 32 For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. 33 And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise.” 34 ***But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.***

Certainly, there are more complicated passages of scripture than this one; more obscure sayings of Jesus that are hard to understand. Jesus’ prediction is not that complicated really. He is going to suffer, die and rise again. Pretty straightforward...but the disciples still couldn’t understand.

In child psychology, there’s a school of thought that maintains children are limited in their understanding of the world by their schema. A schema is a framework for understanding the world, and you cannot understand knowledge that is beyond that framework. To teach ideas beyond one’s schema is like trying to sow a seed without soil. It can’t find purchase.

This is the disciple’s problem with Jesus words. It’s not that they are confusing. It’s that they don’t have the mental framework, the schema if you will, to understand. And to the mind of natural man, it doesn’t compute. How can the brutal suffering and death of the messiah possibly be a remedy and victory for God’s people? Imagine a coach saying you need to lose the game to win the championship? Or a teacher saying you need to fail the test to pass the class?

The disciples didn’t have the schema to understand how the death of the messiah would bring eternal life to all who believe. The schema required for understanding such a thing is what we call faith. Faith is not some information about God or Christ, it is a schema framework for understanding the whole world, things visible and invisible, so that God’s word can and will find purchase in your soil, that you obtain the righteousness of Christ and keep it for eternal life.

By faith, we are given the freedom to walk in love and not according to the schema of this world. This world says hate your enemies; The gospel says to love them. This world says the future is in your hands; the gospels says it’s in God’s. This world says suffering is evil and no one should be unhappy; the gospel says that God’s power is made perfect in weakness...and lashings, strife and imprisonments...in a word adversity, is not a sign that your faith is in vain, but that faith can sustain you through the grace of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.