

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Recently, I have written and preached about the centrality of relationship with Almighty God in our Faith – not dogmas, doctrines, or philosophy, not morality nor liturgy. This is because at the center of our Faith is a Person, not an idea – or, to be more theologically correct, three Persons in one God. To some, it may seem a foreign concept to have a personal, living relationship with God, yet this is what our Faith is all about! Our relationship with God is to be as personal and as real as with the other close relationships in our lives – spouses, parents, friends, etc. – in fact, even more personal and more real. Do we think of God this way? How do we reach this point?

Well, it really is not a secret – I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again, “Friends become friends by spending time with each other.” Think about the relationships you have cultivated in your life. What did you do to improve that relationship? You had to spend time with people in order to grow close to them. Prayer *is* our relationship with God; it is how we spend time with Him. As we spend time with Him, the better we get to know Him, and we allow Him to get to know us. I would venture to say that in all of our good relationships *trust* is an essential factor. For us to spend quality time with a friend, we have to know that that person will respect us and loves us. The same must be there with our relationship with God. Do we trust God?

This weekend’s Gospel speaks very much about *trust*. Jesus says that we are not to worry about our lives, not even about the essentials – food, drink and clothing. He says that God *will* take care of us *if* (there’s always that “if” isn’t there) we “**seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness**” (Matthew 6:33). I know many people that have said to me, “Father, don’t you think that’s a bit much? Do you really think God will take care of all of those *needs*?” Well, Jesus says that He will! That we are worth MORE than the birds of the sky or the flowers of the field; He takes care of them and He will take care of us! This doesn’t mean that we can just sit back on our duffs and wait for everything to be taken care of – no, we must seek the Kingdom of God, and there’s some work when we do that. It does mean, however, that we don’t have to *worry*; God has our back!

So how do we grow in trust? Some may think that we just throw every worry away and “dive in”. For some this may work, but for most of us, as with any relationship, trust must grow organically. I can say that over the years I have grown much in trust of God (though I still have a long way to go). It has been through little steps. There have been moments when I have questioned whether God would take care of a situation, and He did. As I saw His faithfulness, His fidelity in caring for me, I learned that God could be trusted the next time. (As an aside, this is a good reason to have a spiritual journal – you can look back to see your struggles and how God answered them, how He was faithful to you. These reminders are important in growing in trust!)

Little steps.

Each time as I reached out beyond my comfort zone or my ability and I saw God do great things (often in the smallest, most unobtrusive and inconspicuous ways) I learned that I could trust Him more. True, God rarely takes care of things the way that I ask or expect, but when I reflect on every situation in my life, God has always been faithful; He has NEVER let me go.

Do we trust God? Jesus tells us today that God *is trustworthy*! If we believe Jesus – who trusted His Father even to the point of death, and God was faithful in bringing Him back to Life! – then we can start to reach out to God in trust for bigger and bigger things. We begin to see that we *can* entrust our needs, our finances, our families, our relationships, our recreation, and even our sexual lives into God’s Hands. We begin to see that He has an incredible plan for us to flourish and have life, life in abundance (cf. John 10:10). As we grow in trust, we see that as we seek His Will, His Kingdom, His Glory, we become *great*; we find true joy!

Jesus tells us to seek first the Kingdom of God – let us pray that we learn to trust Jesus enough to take Him at His word that everything else will be given to us as well.