

My Brothers and Sisters,

During Ordinary Time, priests throughout the world wear green vestments. Traditionally, green was seen to be the symbol of hope. In today's second reading, we heard "*Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen.*" Cardinal Avery Dulles's monumental work on faith is titled *The Assurance of Things Hoped For*. Faith and hope overlap. Cardinal Dulles interpreted the opening verse of today's reading to mean that "faith is both an assurance that the goods promised by God will be possessed in the future and a conviction that this assurance is reliably grounded in the saving action of Jesus Christ." In other words, our hope in the fulfillment of God's promises is rooted in our faith in the saving action of Jesus.

According to St. Paul, Abraham is our father in faith [Rom. 4:16]. Today's reading from Hebrews cites multiple examples of Abraham's faith, multiple examples of him entrusting his life and his future to God. The reading goes on to say that "...*there came forth from one man... descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sands on the seashore. All these died in faith.*" In other words, his descendants handed down the faith of Abraham to their descendants.

It is critically important for today's children that fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers, hand on their faith to their children and grandchildren. In fact, during his recent trip to Canada, Pope Francis mentioned that this has primarily been the role of mothers and grandmothers. However, I believe at least one study showed that in these times the role of fathers and grandfathers in sharing faith with their children and grandchildren has grown more important in families who want to see their children grow up and continue to be active, practicing Catholics. This message also applies to all of us who are older in our parish community. It is important that we realize our importance to the community and to the faith of the community.

Parents hand on their faith to their children primarily by example. They need to pray in front of their children, teach their children to pray, and pray with their children. Parents and grandparents need to attend Mass every Sunday. They need to provide their children with religious books and read religious books to their younger children. They need to live good, holy lives. Our homes need to have religious images. Finally, parents need to provide formal religious education to their children through Catholic schools or religious education programs.

The final verse of today's Gospel challenges us to be ready for the coming of the Lord: "*You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.*" Think about Representative Jackie Walorski and the others killed in a tragic traffic accident this week. Although the coming of the Son of Man in the Gospels generally refers to the Second Coming of Christ, it can also refer to the coming of Christ at the end of our lives.

When I was little, we were taught to always consider the possible eternal implications of our choices. When we were making moral decisions, we would ask ourselves how this choice could impact our salvation if we were to die today or tonight. Today not so much. Therefore, we have lost a lot of perspective on our choices and actions. Today when we make choices, we focus too much on the here and now. We fail to think about long-term, even eternal, consequences.

My brothers and sisters, as we learned in the first reading, the people of the Old Testament always looked back upon what God had already done for them to give them the confidence that God would continue to be with them and to bless them and therefore the courage to go forward. We need to look back upon what Jesus did for us by dying and rising in order to have the confidence and courage that God is and always will be with us on our journey of life.