



THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ROLE OF FAITH IN OUR LIVES!

The earthquakes in Chile and in Haiti this year have brought us images both of suffering and of heroism. A heroic story comes from one of the rescues in Haiti at the once-beautiful Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption. Though many people, including beloved Archbishop Miot, were killed, rescue dogs heard, beneath the cathedral's rubble, the tap-tapping of someone. An international crew of South Africans and Mexicans began digging. Many hours later, the Mexican rescuer got close to where a woman's voice had been heard. "I was digging," he told reporters later. "Then her hand reached out and grabbed mine! I felt as if it was the hand of God."

In our rescue story, there is a twist. Digging through the rubble, we think of the rescuer as the "godly" one, the one who is digging through the rubble to save the helpless one trapped below. Yet the rescuer says, in speaking of the woman's outreached hand, "I felt as if it was the hand of God." Isn't God like that, too? We think of God coming from on high to rescue us from our sin in the person of Jesus, and surely that is one way to think of how God saves us. But we know from the life of Jesus, that in Jesus' weakness is his glory. Jesus was God, but he took a lowly form, and lived as fully human.

Abraham, in his own way, had a similar story to tell. In our first reading, we hear the story of the angelic visitors. They come to Abraham's place, and he lavishes upon them a feast of hospitality. They remind him of the promise of a son, and even are surprised to hear that he has not told Sarah. God's hand is reaching out to Abraham, but he is not fully ready to grasp it. Abraham will come to be known as the "Father in Faith" of his people for his willingness to leave the Land of Ur and head into the wilderness, following God's promise. But first, Abraham must learn to receive God's gracious gift. He has been promised a son, but hasn't told his wife, Sarah. Perhaps he didn't really believe that old Sarah would bear a child?

God works in God's time. Faith is about learning to work in God's time, not ours. Why do you think they call it faith? It is a hope in things unseen, it is believing in what we cannot touch or control. Faith is full of surprises. Who could imagine that Abraham would take off into the desert and found a new nation? Who would think that Sarah could conceive a child in her old age? In God, all things are possible.

What about Martha? In today's Gospel we hear the story of Martha and Mary, one that brings to mind the tension that seems to exist between work and prayer, or, more pointedly, between social norms and fidelity to the gospel. It is almost impossible for modern Americans to understand how radical it was to have Mary sit at Jesus' feet, in the place normally reserved for men. Martha is shocked and wants Mary to get back in a woman's place; Jesus is hearing none of that. Martha, Martha, you're always so busy, Jesus says (no doubt between sips of tea or bites of figs and bread). He knows that work has to be done, but he also knows there is a time and place for everything. When there's too much busy-ness in our lives, we lose track of the most important things. How will the work get done? Don't worry. Have faith. All things in their due time, Jesus seems to say.

God's ways are not our ways. That we can see in today's Scripture. Just as the rescuer saw the hand of God in the woman he pulled from the rubble of Port-au-Prince's cathedral, we, too, are challenged to twist things around sometimes. We are challenged to look at things from God's perspective, to put our cares aside and to step forward in faith.



Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. Mary has chosen the better part...Luke 10:38-42