

**Year C Oct. 3, 2010 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
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The readings this Sunday speak of patient waiting, even when there is hardship. The first reading from the prophet Habakkuk is well-known as a complaint to God that He does not remedy all the evil that surrounds. The prophet winds up doing an all-night vigil and receives a vision. The Lord tells him to wait, that his hope will not be disappointed. Habakkuk is to write down the vision on tablets so that it can be easily read by all. The Essenes of the Dead Sea Scrolls loved this prophecy and interpreted it this way: write down the prophecy on tablets so that even one running can read it, or so that the one who reads it runs. Meaning, when the salvation events start taking place, things will get moving and one better be ready to run. The last part of the reading is very famous: the righteous one will live through faith or faithfulness, fundamental for the teaching of St. Paul.

Thus the Psalm repeats “if today you hear his voice harden not your hearts.” We must have patient endurance and persevere in the following of Jesus. The Gospel reading has Jesus responding to the disciples’ desire for greater faith by saying that if our faith were as “great” as a mustard seed (the smallest seed in Palestine), we could do wonders. Is it not true that we have very little faith? That we worry that our few loaves are not enough, that a couple of fish cannot feed so many, that we worry about what we shall dress and eat just like the pagans (“Gentiles,” Matthew 6:32)? If we had faith like a mustard seed this world would be quite different. But our faith, and our “faithfulness” (in Hebrew, *emunah*, where the “amen” we repeat so often without meaning it comes from), is indeed smaller even than a “mustard seed.” But as St. Paul tells his “son” Timothy, our gift from God (faith, love, compare Matthew 7:21-23 and Matthew 24:12) can be stirred into a flame once more: our gift from God is not a timid, unbelieving, cowardly or pusillanimous spirit (pusillanimous, “small-souled” is the opposite of magnanimous, “great-souled”). Our attitude should be sober, serious, humble and confident: we are only doing our assigned task and the Lord will provide for all that we need; we have only to remain firm (another meaning of *emunah*, “fidelity”).