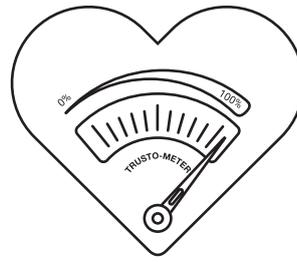


TRUST
IN THE LORD
WITH ALL
YOUR HEART

PROVERBS 3:5



Monthly Reflection:

July 2020

Perfect confidence in God! Wasn't that the hallmark of Jesus' life on earth? Jesus asleep in the stern of the boat in absolute peace amid the windstorm captures perfectly the supreme confidence he had in the Father. What would the frightened disciples who woke him up remember more about that incident later? The raging sea becoming still at His command or his soft yet poignant words, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" (cf. Mk 4:40)

It is when God kisses a person's soul with his divine revelation that faith wells up within him, like a tiny trickle of water that bubbles up to the surface from underground. Yet this trickle has the potential to become a brook, a stream and even, a river. Likewise, our faith too needs to grow, being nourished especially with the word of God where we continue to encounter Him in person. Every trial and temptation becomes an opportunity to know a new dimension of our loving Father. This prompts us to surrender our intellect and will to Him, without which our faith never matures.

The faith of a Christian is always in the person of God, not in a set of belief systems or ideologies. It is this intimate personal faith in God that made St. Paul write from his prison cell, "I am not ashamed, for I know the One in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him" (2 Tim 1:12). His eyes of faith, first illumined on the road to Damascus about thirty years ago, had slowly evolved and matured, from a trickle to a mighty river, through various trials and triumphs. It is to challenge us to this kind of faith, which God offers to all who dare to believe, that the writer of Proverbs 3:5 exhorts, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart".

We are called to trust with all our heart, so that there is no space for fear and doubt to fester. Trust is something that our heart does, more than our mind. The more we know God personally, the more the grace to trust naturally grows in us. The storms that visit our lives without warning reveal how shallow or strong our trust is. Different people trust God for different reasons but a child of God trusts in Him because He is the Father who gives only the best. Abraham's journey up mount Moriah to sacrifice his only son was one of trust. There, he encountered a new dimension of God - Jehovah Jireh, a God who provides (cf. Gen 22:14). Can you imagine the sweetness of worship that emanated from his heart to God as he came down the mountain? Yes, those who put their trust in God will never be put to shame.

The continuation of the verse from Proverbs, "and lean not on your own understanding", discloses the biggest obstacle to such radical trust. As humans, we long for certainty. Uncertainty can be the biggest joy-buster in our lives. Uncertainty about marriage, job, health, ministry, children, finances... can make life seem like walking a tightrope. On the other hand, certainty about life often fosters self-reliance. The doubts and fears stemming from the wounds of misplaced trust and broken promises of the past, can make a life of complete trust difficult; even trust in God. And so, when windstorms lash against our lives, we doubt and are afraid like the disciples. Although 'understanding' is a God given gift, our rational self should not stand on its own, but lean on the higher wisdom of God. We need to pray, that the grace of faith opens the eyes of our hearts, so we can surrender our intellect and will to God who is Sovereign and in control, come what may. Even when the certainty of being led by God is denied to us, or when all attempts to listen to His Voice are met with deafening silence, grace is available to walk by faith and not by sight. We might falter at times, but His merciful love will get us back on our feet as we choose to trust in Him even in our failures and darkness.

God leads us not only through the green meadows but also through the valley of death. Yet a child of God knows that God will never forsake nor abandon him. Today, it could be a pandemic or economic recession; tomorrow it might be the loss of a loved one or a severe temptation. Through it all He teaches us to focus on Him more than the circumstances so that we can declare like David, "Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear". As Jesus Youth, let us live lives of perfect confidence in the Father, whose right hand upholds us! And then, we will be able to shout to the storms that assail us, "You cannot harm us; for Jesus, the Mighty One is in our boat."

Saint Quote: "Those whose hearts are enlarged by confidence in God run swiftly on the path of perfection. They not only run, they fly; because, having placed all their hope in the Lord, they are no longer weak as they once were. They become strong with the strength of God, which is given to all who put their trust in Him." (St Alphonsus Liguori).

