

In our Gospel passage today we see our Lord warn us to be prepared for when he comes to judge us. Why, if our Lord loves us and wants us to be with him does he not tell us exactly when he will come so we can be prepared? We see that God's ways are not our ways because we might think it would make sense to let everyone know exactly when God would take them to judge them. As our Lord tells us in the beginning of today's Gospel that we are not to store up treasures of earthly things, we see how that is a continuation of the theme of the Gospel for last Sunday. We might think that applies to priests and religious to not store up material treasures but Vatican II says: "All the faithful are invited and obliged to holiness and the perfection of their own state of life. Accordingly let all of them see that they direct their affections rightly, lest they be hindered in their pursuit of perfect love by the use of worldly things and by an adherence to riches which is contrary to the spirit of evangelical poverty, following the Apostle's advice: Let those who use this world not fix their abode in it, for the form of this world is passing way (1 Corinthians 7:31)." Lumen Gentium 42.

Our second reading today says faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. The Navarre Commentary explains that by saying "through faith the believer acquires certainty concerning God's promises and a firm conviction that he or she will obtain access to heaven." Pope John Paul I said that it is God who gives us that trust that we will reach the goal of heaven. So we see how faith can be increased because we would probably say that some might not have that certainty they will go to heaven. Then there are others who feel they will go to heaven even though they do not see the need to live according to God's teaching in order to get to heaven. We see that in those who do not follow the Commandments and moral teaching of the Church and act as if there is nothing wrong in not following those teachings.

Faith, the Navarre Commentary points out, can be more certain than what we know from someone giving us some human knowledge because the truths of faith are given to us by God and that is more certain than any human knowledge we can learn from anyone. But, the Navarre Commentary explains, the truths of faith are not obvious and cannot be obtained by reason. It says to accept the knowledge

given to us by God requires faith and as the First Vatican Council taught, because of God's grace we can accept those truths of our faith that he gives us and we can trust them because God cannot deceive. The Navarre Commentary explains that in order to believe, we must want to believe. So we see why the efforts we make each day to practice our faith, to cooperate with God's grace are so important because in doing that we show we want to believe. We are always free to make that decision to believe or not each day and so we help ourselves become strong in that choice by the way we practice our faith each day and we receive merit for that faith says the Navarre Commentary.

St. John of Avila, a Spanish priest who lived from 1500 to 1569, said a person's faith can make them more sure of something than if they saw it with their own eyes. So we see again how important the daily practice of our faith is because even though we believe in what has been revealed by God about the truths of our faith, about truths such as the Resurrection of our Lord can we say we have that degree of faith about those truths which St. John of Avila describes when he says we can be more certain of those truths than we can be of things that we see with our own eyes? We see then how much consolation we can receive knowing that by trying to cooperate each day with God's grace we can become more certain of those truths of our faith and we see the beauty of having great faith in those truths.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux, speaking about Abraham's obedience, which we saw in our second reading today, says that Abraham was the first person that ever renounced his possessions in obedience to God and moved with untiring speed to do what God wanted as he left land, his parents, abandoned his inheritance and became a stranger in a foreign land and St. Bernard also says it was Abraham's great obedience which led him to be willing to sacrifice Isaac, if that is what God wanted. We see then how Abraham is the model for our detachment from possessions in obedience to God's will. In this celebration of the Eucharist our Lord give us himself to enable us to fulfill that duty to obey and to increase that faith, so that we will be more and more certain of those truths he gives us.