

Ok, imagine with me that you're in a quiet place, alone...no one around...when suddenly Jesus is standing right there in front of you...and He looks you straight in the eye and says..."Do you trust Me?...Do you trust Me?"...How would you answer Jesus, hmm...right now...today? That's the message from today's Gospel passage I want to focus on this am/pm....DO WE TRUST Jesus?

Our Gospel scene is in the upper room the night before Jesus would go to the cross...It's a day in the lives of Jesus' disciples where everything is going wrong...Judas has just gone off to carry out his plan to betray Jesus...The Jewish religious leaders are out to get Jesus and His followers,... to get rid of them all...Jesus has just told Peter that in the next 24 hours he will deny Him three times. ...And the real kicker is that Jesus has just told them that He's going to be leaving them. ...Their whole world is about to collapse...They are confused, they're worried, they're anxious and afraid...And there's Jesus, totally aware of the horrible fate that awaits Him,...yet He's less concerned about His own problems than He is about His friends. ... Jesus knew what His disciples would be facing after He was gone, so He spoke words of encouragement: "Do not let your hearts be troubled...You trust God; now trust Me."...Then he told them how He would go and prepare a place for them and come back to take them with Him...He basically tells them, "Stop worrying...Trust Me!"...These words were meant to comfort them...to bring them peace,...because the basis of peace is what ?...TRUST!...Without trust, there is no peace... What was true for those disciples is equally true for us: if we are worried, anxious, afraid, ...it's because we don't trust...Peace only comes when we trust our Lord Jesus Christ. ...It's as simple as that.

We often use TRUST and FAITH interchangeably, but they're not quite the same thing...FAITH is believing that God- Father, Son and Holy Spirit - can do anything,...has the power to make anything happen or not happen. ...TRUST is believing that God, that Jesus, will always do what's best...See the difference? ...We place our trust in a lot of people every day: our family, friends, our doctors, our employers, the people who cook our food,...our banks(with banks the trust isn't mutual...You ever wonder why they attach chains to their pens, hmm? We trust them with our money, but they don't trust us with their pens.)...And what do all these people we trust have in common? ...Sometimes they let us down...If we trust them,...how much more should we trust Jesus?

Now, of course, it's easy to trust Jesus when everything's going good, isn't it...and a lot harder when things are going bad...Because when we're hit with trouble after trouble...when we're hurting,...when we're anxious about what lies ahead,...when we can't see a way for things to get better...when we can't see how anything good can come from what's happening to us,...we may begin to question. ...Where is Jesus in all this? ...Can I trust Him to help me get through this?...That's when we need to look to the Word of God ...In Rom 8:28, St. Paul assures us, "All things work for good for those who love God"...When we love God, TRUST God,...all things, even the worst trials and troubles we're hit with, will have some good come from them...We may not see the good right away...That's where TRUST comes in...like in this imaginary conversation between Jesus and a guy name Joe.

Joe: Jesus can I ask you a question?...Promise you won't get mad...

Jesus: Sure, go ahead.

Joe: Well, I had a pretty rough day today...Why did you let all those bad things happen to me?

Jesus: What do you mean?...

Joe: Well, first^t my alarm didn't go off,... **Then, my car took forever** to start...so I was over an hour late for work...**And at lunch** the guy at the deli made my sandwich wrong and I didn't have

time to wait for him to make a new one... **And when I got home** I was looking forward to soaking my feet in my new foot massager and relax. BUT it wouldn't turn on!!! ...**Nothing went** right today! Why did you do that?

Jesus: Hmm...let me see...I made your alarm not work and your car have trouble starting because I didn't want you to be there when the donut cart came by your office. You've been getting a little chunky lately...As for the problem at the deli, the man making your sandwich has the flu, and I didn't want you to catch it....You don't need another excuse to miss church...And your new massager has a short in it that would've electrocuted you, so I kept it from turning on.

Joe: Oh,...uh...gee...I didn't know.

Jesus: That's ok, Joe...Just try to trust me in all things...good and bad...big and small.

Joe: Ok, Lord...From now on I will trust You....And thank you Jesus for everything today.

Ok, this silly scenario might be a little far-fetched, but the point is that when Jesus makes or allows a bad thing to happen,...we can trust that there is some good that will come out of it...

About 16 years ago, my wife Cathy's mom spent several months in hospice care until she died of cancer; she was only 72....During her time there, the hospice nurses and aides treated her and Cathy's dad with such kindness, love, and compassion that Cathy and I never worried when we had to leave them to come home; we knew they were being tenderly cared for...Now Cathy's parents – Mom and Dad - were from a generation that grew up harboring strong prejudices toward certain groups, especially African Americans. ...They didn't hate black people, but they didn't have much good to say about them either...It turns out that several of Mom's wonderful aides were black,...and during those last days of Mom's life, a warm fondness developed between her and all of her caregivers...especially with a young black man named Ricky....The relationship between Mom and Ricky had grown so special that Dad asked him to be a pall-bearers at Mom's funeral...As I watched Ricky help carry Mom's casket into the church, I marveled at how God had made something good – the breaking down of those walls of prejudice – come out of something so sad and painful...I'm convinced - after 72 yrs of seeing how God works - that we can trust Him to bring good out of bad, light out of darkness, life out of death.

My friends, every one of us here is either coming out of a troubling situation,...is IN a troubling sit.,...or will soon be in a troubling sit....There's no avoiding it...When trouble comes, Jesus asks: "Do you trust Me?" Now when Jesus asks us to trust Him,...He doesn't mean we should sit back and He'll take care of everything...We have to do our part too...It's like the old Middle East proverb: "Trust in God, but tie up your camel."...I guess we can update this to "Trust in God, but lock your car doors." ...There's a verse from the Book of Proverbs that says: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart. ...and He will direct your paths."...If we trust the Lord *with all our hearts*, He will direct us, show us what we need to do...How will He do this? ...Well, we shouldn't expect an e-mail or a text message...We need to pray, pray, and pray some more, hopefully doing more listening and less talking...so we can hear Jesus speak to us.

We need to come to Mass with open hearts and minds as Jesus speaks to us through the words from the Bible and the words of the preacher, ...and as He comes to us in the mystery of the Eucharist...We need to listen for His voice as He speaks to us through the people and the events in our lives. ... If we listen we will hear His voice. He said "I am the Good Shepherd, ...my sheep hear My voice and they follow Me."...If we truly listen,...we will hear the GS's voice, and we will follow Him...and He will lead us through every trial, every trouble, every tear...

You know, it's easy to get up here and preach, "Don't worry ..Have faith, trust God, trust Jesus, everything will be OK."... It's a lot easier to preach it than to practice it....I struggle with trusting Jesus as much as anybody else...During those times when I am struggling, I often come in here and look up at that cross to remind myself of who it is that is asking for my trust. ...And I look at those open arms and I think back to the time when my kids were little and they would be

jumping up and down on the bed and they'd be screaming, "Catch me, Daddy! Catch me!"...I would hold out my arms and they'd jump off the bed into my waiting arms...They jumped because they trusted me...They were never afraid that I wouldn't catch them. They knew I would never let them drop to the floor and get hurt;... they knew how much I loved them.

My friends, who better for you and I to trust than the one who accepted the pain and suffering of the cross to show us how much He loves us?...My prayer for all of you and for me is that we will never be afraid to take that leap, fling ourselves into His arms, trusting that those arms He opened so wide for us on the cross will always be there to catch us. AMEN.