



**Five Important Spiritual Thoughts from the Liturgy of the Word
...and follow up for the Secular Franciscan
December 15 – December 21**

1 -- "My love shall never leave you." (Is 54:10)

...A very consoling thought, but is my life showing the proper thanksgiving?

2 – "Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man..." (Mt 1:19)

...What is the meaning of "righteous" as I see it, and am I coming close to being "righteous"?

3 – "But now you will be speechless and unable to talk until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words." (Lk 1:20)

...Zechariah's faith was lacking. Am I showing my faith to others as I should?

FAITH

**"Amen, I say to you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith."
(Matthew 8:10)**

**"But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"
(Luke 18:8)**

**When Jesus heard this he was amazed at him [the centurion] and, turning, said to the crowd following him, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith."
(Luke 7:9)**

**"Woman, great is your faith."
(Matthew 15:28)**

She had reason to dislike, hate almost, the people who had settled in her area. Never really agreeing with the religion they taught, she had more

SHAPING THE FRANCISCAN FOOTPRINT

by Father Mike Scully OFM Cap., Regional Spiritual Assistant



than enough to do to keep her family healthy without calling on any god. Her husband had passed away early, and her daughter had something wrong with her. She didn't really know what it was, but she almost thought that the devil himself had possessed her at times. She had tried the

so-called professional people who try to heal such things, but was not able to find any help for her.

Then she heard about this man who had the power to heal. He was of that faith of many of the people around her, although she didn't really believe it. After she heard of him and found that he was near where she lived, she had followed him around, and watched what he was capable of doing.

So, with a feeling that it couldn't hurt anything, she brought her daughter to him, but he and his school of followers refused to listen to her. She was discouraged, but finally had a chance to speak to him directly. Her conversation with him was at first hostile. He had called her a name, but she answered back with her usual straightforward way of speaking, demanding almost that he listen to her.

He finally did, and he healed her daughter. She immediately saw what kind of man he was, and what kind of faith he was asking of others. She accepted what he said, becoming one of the many people who were accepting what he said. He even complimented her on her faith in him.

Another thought about faith:

A number of years ago, in a small Kentucky town, among the buildings of the town, there were two churches and a whiskey distillery. Both churches felt that the whiskey distillery was a bad image for the town. Besides that, the owner was an atheist. They tried to get it closed down, but they were never successful. So, they decided to have a joint prayer meeting, asking God to intervene, and help them get rid of the whiskey distillery. They did it a number of times.

Sure enough, one Saturday night, there was a terrible electrical storm; lightning struck the distillery, burned it to the ground. The next morning, Sunday, both churches were rejoicing, speaking of the power of prayer. Meanwhile, the owner of the distillery, quite distraught, of course, was told by the fire insurance people that it was an "act of God" and there was no coverage. So, the owner who did not believe in God sued the churches, claiming that they had conspired with God to destroy his building.



Quite interesting: the atheist becomes a believer because it is for his benefit. The church leaders denied categorically that they had done anything to cause the fire. That also is interesting: believers in God, denying the power of prayer even after they had prayed for something to happen. The judge dismissed the case, I'm sure with a little laugh. I believe that the church members deserved to be sued for using God for their own convenience. I believe many of our prayers of petition do that—we try to use God for our own convenience.

4 – “Shout for joy, O daughter Zion! Sing joyfully, O Israel!
(Zep 3:14)

...Am I as joyful as I should be?

**5 – “Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you
by the Lord would be fulfilled.” (Lk 1:45)**
...again, how is my trust in the Lord?