

## August 18, 2019

### HAVE FAITH: LOOK UP!

LOOK UP! These are the two words that summarized my homilies last week-end. When we LOOK UP, we focus our life on GOD as opposed to LOOKING DOWN on earthly and sinful matters. LOOK UP! Do not look back LIVE IN THE PRESENT and TRUST IN GOD! LOOK UP! ASK FOR GOD'S HELP and HE WILL PROVIDE! HAVE HOPE IN GOD'S PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE! HAVE HOPE! HAVE FAITH: LOOK UP!

While all three readings dealt with FAITH, which is foundational for our Christian Life on Earth, I focused entirely on the second reading, the beautiful passage from Chapter 11 of the Letter to the Hebrews. The first verse (translation from NEW AMERICAN BIBLE, NAB which is used in all Sundays' readings) has helped to define FAITH: "*FAITH is the realization of what is HOPED FOR and EVIDENCE of THINGS NOT SEEN*" (NAB, Hebrews: 11:1). The translation of the same verse in the New Jerusalem Bible (NJB) gives another perspective on FAITH: "*ONLY FAITH can guarantee the BLESSINGS WE HOPE FOR, or PROVE the existence of REALITIES THAT ARE UNSEEN*". Another variation in translation is: "FAITH is the Assurance of THINGS HOPED FOR (HEAVEN) and the Conviction of THINGS UNWANTED (HELL)."

As indicated in the footnote of the NJB (Hebrews 11:1), the author of the Letter to the Hebrews is addressing the Jewish Christians who have been discouraged by PERSECUTION, and therefore the author emphasizes "it is ONLY WHAT IS FUTURE and WHAT IS INVISIBLE that concerns HOPE". From that first verse of Chapter 11, theologians have seen a solid definition of FAITH, as "the ANTICIPATED and ASSURED POSSESSION of HEAVENLY REALITIES".

FAITH is RELIANCE ON GOD, NOT ON SELF! HAVE FAITH: LOOK UP! Do not keep looking down to the human reality! LOOK UP! LOOK UP TO GOD IN HEAVEN! Easier said than done....HAVE FAITH! BELIEVE that "GOD raised JESUS from the dead and THROUGH HIM, OFFERS LIFE in ALL WHO BELIEVE IN HIM"! HAVE HOPE! HAVE FAITH! TRUST IN THE ABUNDANT GENEROSITY OF GOD! HAVE FAITH: LOOK UP TO GOD!

I will conclude this reflection on HOPE and FAITH by giving two experiences that I have had in the last two weeks:

**First**, while on a one-day pilgrimage to LOURDES at the end of last June, I went into the waters (a) to thank GOD for having healed me following the OPEN HEART

SURGERY ( April 25, 2018) , ( b) to pray for the spiritual and physical healing of all of you, and (c) to seek special blessings from the HOLY SPIRIT. As I was being immersed, I LOOKED UP to the HOLY SPIRIT, and then afterwards felt an **amazing grace** enveloping me and then for nearly 15 minutes, I felt being transformed by the HOLY SPIRIT! LOOK UP! SEEK HELP FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT. In addition to this spiritual renewal, the Holy Spirit gave me some additional physical STRENGTH: I can now kneel down, walk faster, and swim faster!

**Second**, upon return from Lourdes and a wonderful stay with my family in Southern France, I went several times to pray at the foot of our Statue of Our Lady of Fatima (blessed on December 8, 2018), usually in early morning or late evening. The entire church is then rather dark. The blue light behind Our Lady brings a mysterious touch. As I am kneeling down, I LOOK UP TO SEE the FACE OF OUR LADY... and on a recent evening, I became mesmerized by such a beautiful face, and suddenly I saw OUR LADY moving her lips. I pinched myself to make sure that I was not dreaming. The lips kept moving but I could not hear any sound. It was total silence... I thought Mary was telling me: "**Keep Praying!**" Do you believe in MIRACLES, small or great... I do, I believe that mini-miracles happen every day: LOOK UP! TRUST IN GOD! HE WILL PROVIDE! LOOK UP! LOOK AT THE FACE OF OUR LADY and BE TRANSFORMED!

COME HOLY SPIRIT! COME! HELP EACH OF US TO LOOK UP TO YOU! COME HOLY SPIRIT! RENEW US SPIRITUALLY, EMOTIONALLY, PHYSICALLY!



*One in Christ,  
Father Alain*