

27 Sunday C

October 2, 2022

St. Patrick

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**“Increase our faith!”**

Jesus replied: **“If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.”**

The master Renaissance artist Michelangelo drew a crowd of spectators as he worked. There was the sound of Michelangelo’s mallet on chisel as he shaped a large block of white marble. Chips from the white marble were flying everywhere. A little girl was mesmerized and, at one point, she blurted out her question: “What are you making?” Michelangelo paused for a moment and then answered the girl, “There is an angel in there and I must set it free.” (1)

Each of us, St. Patrick’s, is God’s work of art. It all began as if each of us was a block of white marble. God’s masterpiece is within each of us. We’re not to be like something which goes through an assembly line, all of us shaped and made exactly the same.

No, Friends, God wants to shape each of us uniquely, chipping away at our defects of character. Indeed, God wants to “set us free” and become the singular work of art which God has dreamed of.

We heard the Old Testament prophet Habakkuk dare to question God when foreign conquerors were inflicting harsh injustices on the chosen people.

**“How long, O Lord, I cry for help but you do not listen?”**

Then the prophet catalogues a list of hardships God’s own people are facing—violence, ruin, misery, destruction, strife and discord.

**“How long, O Lord, I cry for help but you do not listen?”**

Don’t we make that complaint at God as well? God, I’m not—we’re not—a work of art, but a disaster, worth nothing. And God answers: **“For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it...it will not delay...The righteous person lives by their faith.”**

Yes, Friends: We're called to hold onto faith in our God. It's an unwavering, firm loyalty to God...trusting that God has a dream for us. Much more than how much we want it, much more God wants "to set us free."

Over time, the masterpiece in that block of white marble—well, Michelangelo kept chipping away. The dream was there, waiting to be set free.

St. Patrick's, that's why we need each other. We need to hold onto that faith together, especially when we complain, "How long, O God!"

God will mold us, crafting a work of art!

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(1) As told by W. Robert McClelland in *Fire in the Hole*, quoted in "See the New Reality" in *Illustrations, Quotes and Lectionary Reflections by Various Authors for Ordinary*, 27C @deaconsil.com

*General Intercessions*

*October 2, 2022*

*27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time*

**Grow the “mustard seed” of faith within us, that we might live as faithful servants of Jesus as his disciples; we pray to you, O Lord—**

**As we remember this Tuesday the witness of St. Francis of Assisi, inspire all who serve to restore health to our environment, to follow his witness of non-violence, and to care for animals; we pray to you, O Lord—**

**As we celebrate “Respect for Life” month, increase our wonder and reverence for all human life; we pray to you, O Lord—**

**Help us to reach out to those who are despised, rejected, or neglected—especially those who are immigrants and refugees seeking a new home; we pray to you, O Lord—**

**Bring about hope and support to those who are suffering from Hurricane Ian in Florida and up the Atlantic coast; we pray to you, O Lord—**

**Grant everlasting joy in your presence to all the faithful departed, especially those who have died from Hurricane Ian, and those killed in the Ukraine war; we pray to you, O Lord—**