I enjoy bringing Holy Communion to the sick and shut-ins. Lately, I was moved by the faith one of our shut-ins has shared with me. I visited with Joan and Dough Beals, and when the time came to offer them Communion…her eyes teared up at the expectation of receiving Jesus in bread and wine.

Oh, the importance of having Jesus in our life, and faith in God! How could we live without it? How does it help to know and love Jesus in times of trouble and distress? And yet, sometimes we feel like we are on shaky ground, and just as the disciples we pray for an increase in faith (Lk 17:5). How much more faith do we need to be the disciples he wants us to be? How much faith do we need to pick up our cross and follow him? On several occasions, when Jesus encountered his disciple’s stubbornness and thickness, he called them people of little faith ([Mt 8:26](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mt+8%3A26&version=NRSV); [Lk 12:28](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke+12%3A28&version=NrsV)). Today, he seems to say that either we have faith, or we don’t. Are we truly his disciples if we don’t have faith? How do we display trust in him? What difference does faith make in our life? To whom can we tell of his love for us?

The questions seem to multiply: What do we do when confronted with storms and trials, prolonged sickness, scary surgeries, approaching death, civil turmoil, criminality, and cruelty? Having faith does not mean we are going to be spared of our troubles. Are we still going to pick up our cross amid the trouble we face? And if we are, is our cross shaped after the redemptive cross of Jesus? How does our trust in God manifest itself? What do we base our hope on? From where do we draw spiritual courage and strength? What place does prayer have in our life? The question does not need to be how much faith we think we need to face the world. Rather, the question needs to be: How is our faith shaping our life? What amount

of faith do we need to show compassion and love even for those who hurt us?[[1]](#footnote-1) Do we trust God walking with us?

A man fell off a cliff and, as he fell, he was able to grab hold of a shrubby bush. As he dangled in space, he was filled with terror and called out toward heaven: “Help, is there anyone up there?” A calm, powerful voice replied, “Yes, there is.” The man pleaded, “Can you help me? Can you help me?” The calm voice replied: “Yes, I can. Simply let loose of the bush, and everything will turn out fine.” There was a tense pause, then the man yelled, “Anyone else up there?” Our question, when in distress, seems to be “If there is a God, does God really care?”

It’s a familiar scene, from corrupt governments to human violations and mass migrations. At some point, people look at the horrors of the world and wonder why God seems absent amid suffering. Habakkuk does get an answer from God. But it's just like God not to give him the answer he so desperately wants. God tells him to just wait. Say what? Habakkuk must learn to wait for vindication. God is calling the prophet to trust as he waits, to live a holy life expecting that God will answer in due time.[[2]](#footnote-2) That’s quite a challenge. It’s hard to wait for God’s justice when injustice seems to be running amok in the land. God seems to ask a lot from us.

An astronaut lay strapped into his capsule, waiting to be launched, when a reporter asked him via radio: “How do you feel right now?” “How would you feel,” the astronaut replied, “if you were sitting on top of 150.000 parts, each supplied by the lowest bidder?”

Trust seems to imply that whatever challenge we face when we walk with God, our faith is *enough* to do the most impossible things. What do we do to lower our anxiety and maintain confidence? Could prayer, meditation, and a positive attitude help? Could focusing on our strengths rather than on our weaknesses help us? Behaving as disciples means doing what is required of a disciple (Lk 17:10): we’ll do our part and the Father of Jesus will do his (Micah 6:8; Pr. 4; Ps. 37:5-7; Mt. 28:20). When we feel overwhelmed by the life challenges, let us not look at the problem to remove; rather, let us listen to the voice inside that whispers: “Trust and wait for the Lord!”

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   | This week in Dallas we watched Brandt Jean, 18, hug Amber R. Guyger, the former police officer who shot and killed his older brother, Botham Shem Jean, as he sat alone in his apartment. He hugged her in a courtroom after she was convicted of murder and sentenced to 10 years in prison, far shorter than the maximum sentence of 99 years. “Most of the time you would see expressions of anger and grief,” Sarah Mervosh, a national correspondent who had been covering the Guyger trial for The Times all week, said . “To see someone so young express forgiveness so unequivocally was striking. And then to watch the judge wiping tears from her eyes and later stand up and give Amber Guyger a hug as well.” |

   [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/04/opinion/sunday/susan-rice-tough-love.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)