In the passage that we just read from the Gospel of Luke, the disciples were making a demand requesting Jesus to “*increase their faith!*” This was a rather intrigue request. These disciples were not asking for anything materialistic, but rather spiritual. Perhaps these disciples felt insecure, inadequate, or not good enough to do what they were commissioned to do. These disciples had said YES to follow Jesus and had dedicated their lives for the kingdom of God.

Jesus knew that before these disciples signed themselves up…no one would ever have enough faith to make a “perfect” disciple. We acknowledge that we are a constant work-in-progress! No one can claim that he or she has it all, no matter how long one has been baptized or as a member of any particular church. There is no difference whether one has lots of faith or very little, or a simple faith vs. multi-faceted faith. Faith is still faith, and God will accept whatever faith we have and do great things with it, even as small as the size of a mustard seed, as our parable reminded to us today.

Furthermore, if you look into this more closely, when the disciples asked Jesus to “increase their faith!” You notice that they were not asking Jesus as a favor or a question, they were making a proclamation. Whoever the English translator was put in the “!” at the end to emphasize the “imperative” mood of the phrase “increase our faith!”

The disciple’s request to “increase their faith” is two-fold. First, it acknowledges that **there’s an inadequacy of their faith**…something is missing. There’s an empty void that needs to be filled. They had this craving and yearning to be better and not to be complacent and satisfied with what they were having. Second, it acknowledges that **this faith supplement comes from the outside**. It’s not something that one can earn its way towards or if you do your good deeds not, you’ll get rewarded later on. That’s not how faith works. Faith is not commodity to be exchanged or rewarded. Our Faith is a simple gift from God, given to us freely. We have the choice of embracing it or rejecting it. But the question is whether we exercise our faith or not?”

Rather than magically increasing the faith of the disciples and granting them what they asked for, Jesus turned this into a teaching moment about the nature of faith. **Faith is not something that we can quantify. It’s not something that you can go and get refilled or replenished in order to better ourselves. Or as one theologian simply put it, *“Faith” as an inward conviction that prompts for an outward expression and action.*** In other word, our faith and our actions must correspond to each other.

But where does our faith come from? I think the disciples got this part down when they acknowledged that the source of our faith comes from God and not generated by ourselves. There’s this misconception that if we have faith, then WE can have anything we desire and invite God to meet according to OUR commands. We set things into motions according to OUR plan and then asked God to fulfill our plan and to bless OUR plan. But unfortunately, that’s NOT the right attitude towards faith.

**To have faith in God simply means that we let go of our own human desires, our own sense of securities, power and domination, and lay our dependencies and trust upon God. It’s an act of humility acknowledging that God is sovereignly in control and not us.** The size or the amount of our faith does not matter, but our ultimate motive and our allegiance do. Even if our faith is as small as a mustard seed, as our passage today suggested, God will magnify and increase it, if we are simply willing to let God do what God wills.

Jesus used the metaphor of a mustard seed to illustrate, if our lives were planted in the right soil with proper nourishment, it too can blossom into a full-grown tree and bear much fruits for the Kingdom of God. Jesus used the mulberry tree to illustrate his point because a mulberry tree is known for its deep-rooted system. Jesus was saying that even if a mulberry tree were to be uprooted (as complex and deep as it is) and planted in the sea, it can still happen. I found this rather intriguing also! How can a full grown tree be replanted out in the sea and still expect to grow and to bear fruits? It’s impossible. How many of you have seen a tree being planted in the sea? At least I have not!!! So what is Jesus trying to say here? What he’s saying is that, **something that’s seemingly impossible CAN still happen, for as long as one has faith that God will make it happen.** **Things may NOT always go according to OUR way, but will always be according to God’s way. That’s important for us to grapple.**

To me, this seems like parallel analogy used by Jesus with the **“camel going through the eye of a needle”.** If taken literally, it doesn’t make any sense. How can a deep-rooted tree be planted in the seas and still expect it to grow? We will NEVER have enough faith in accordance to God’s plan for us. **It’s not about the amount of faith that one must have, but rather about one’s simple obedience in receiving and being entrusted with such gift of faith from God.** Are we bearing fruits in accordance to the faith that is given to us?

By God’s grace, all of us already have this seed of faith implanted in our hearts. Sometimes we may have buried it or let it fallen by the wayside. Sometimes we may have to dig a little deeper in order to discover it once again…nevertheless that seed of faith is still there.

Even if our faith is as small as a mustard seed, it opens us up with the greater potential of what God sees in us. As the gardener, God will cultivate this seed of faith in order to fulfill God’s ultimate purpose and plan. **Even the smallest of faith has the power to perform the greatest of all miracles.**

This week marks the 2 year anniversary of the passing of our beloved friend Mary Ann Hamilton. As you remember, Mary Ann would always have something to say and she would tell them like they are, whether she approved them or not. Once in a while, she would have something deeply profound to say as well. I remember during one of my last visits to her at the nursing home, she uttered this deep and profound statement (or more of a proclamation) of faith saying that *“Where I am is exactly where God wants me to be. I have faith in God. God loves me and that’s all it matters! What am I? I’m only a tiny seed in God’s hand!”* Indeed, what a powerful statement of faith that was! Even though she was confined to her wheelchair and was limited to her mobility and her freedom, she never forgot who she was, as a precious child of God, as a tiny seed of faith, held in the hand of God. She was still sharing her testimony of faith, even when she was in the nursing home. Her body might be small but her seed of faith was as big as that of a mulberry tree that continues to bear fruits. Well done, Mary Ann, the mustard seed We all miss you very much.

In the same way, each of us are also gifted with this planted seed of the Gospel. Through our faith, even as small as a mustard seed, we too can be developed, nurtured, and worked wonders by the grace and the love of God, as long as we surrender ourselves and allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives. As we read in our *Call to Worship* earlier, from the Book of Lamentations, the prophet Jeremiah proclaimed a message of hope for the people of God, who were under foreign captivity with their homeland destroyed in ruin. “***The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, God’s mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness, O God!”***

On this first Sunday in October every year, we stand united with the universal church worldwide by joining in the celebration of the World Communion Sunday. It is a day of reckoning and proclamation of the unity, faith, and hope that are shared amongst our fellow Christian sisters and brothers, regardless of our denomination and traditions, no matter how big or how small of our congregations…size does NOT matter, but the amount of faith does!!! It is a day in which we recognize our common unity in Christ, a collective, tiny seeds of faith that enables us to do greater kingdom works that Christ has started and commissioned us to carry on to the ends of the earth.

Friends, later on we may once again come before this table with the littlest faith that we may have, but that’s OK. God will magnify it and blossoms it, so that we may bear fruits for the kingdom of God. The bread that we break and the cup that we drink signify the unity, the faith and the forgiveness that we must share with one another as sisters and brothers all around us in this world, in Christ, with Christ and for Christ.

**The *Seed of Faith* has already been planted in our lives, so now it’s up to us fulfill the promises that we’ve made! God will nurture, water, and cultivate the *Seed of Faith* in us.** It is God who would enable us to do God’s work among others and to be the ambassadors and agents of God’s love in this world. Even with the faith of a mustard seed, a mountain can be moved.[[1]](#footnote-1) Nothing is impossible with God.[[2]](#footnote-2) In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, Amen.

1. *Matthew 17:20* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Luke 1:37* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)