

FEBRUARY 18, 2022  
Friday of the 6<sup>th</sup> Week in OT  
James 2: 14-24, 26; Mark 8: 34-38 – 9: 1

“FAITH AND GOOD WORKS.”

Following the Lord entails sacrifices, faith, works to be done and love, love and love – more love than ever because in love and for love we can do anything and everything for the sake of One we loved. Both readings today, from the Letter of James and the gospel of Mark, give us norms in following Jesus, our Lord.

For James, faith without good works is dead. True followers of Christ not only dealt on believing but also must result to actions. It is not the actions themselves save a person, but actions are the evidence or indicator that faith is genuine and authentic. “In other words, our total faith in Jesus as Lord and Saviour is absolutely primary. We cannot save ourselves simply by our own efforts. We don’t ‘earn’ salvation by what we do. Salvation is a totally gratuitous gift of God. Through faith we open ourselves totally and unconditionally to the Way of Jesus and recognise in him our access to the infinite love of God for us. What he is saying is that a genuine faith and commitment to Christ MUST result in our passing on the love that God gives us to others, and especially to those in any kind of need.”<sup>1</sup> James gave us examples: “If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,’ and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So, faith by itself if it has no works, is dead.”<sup>2</sup> So, James is reminding us Catholics, we must live out our faith by reaching out to our brothers and sisters in need. Sometimes, we think we are good Catholics because we attend daily masses, pray the rosary and novenas, participate in pilgrimages and pious devotions. Yes, of course they are good things, but they are not

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<sup>1</sup> [livingspace.sacredspace.ie](http://livingspace.sacredspace.ie)

<sup>2</sup> James 2: 15-17 Holy Bible NRSVCE Canadian Bible Society

definitely the ACTIONS that James is speaking about. We must live the faith by being loving, forgiving, and joining in the struggle for justice and peace.

In the gospel, St. Mark told us “to be a follower of Jesus is to be ready to go exactly the way that he went. ‘If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me.’ Surrendering one’s life totally into a commitment to Jesus and to his Way (as expressed in the Gospel) leads to an enrichment which nothing else can supply. This is a clear challenge that anyone who wants to follow Jesus must be ready both to suffer and give their lives in love for others. Those who make every effort to preserve their lives and hang on to what they have with no regard for transcendent values, or the needs of others are destined to lose everything, not least their integrity, dignity and self-respect.”<sup>3</sup> Denying Jesus today, ashamed of Jesus and His words, has a terrible consequence: we will be denied in front of the Father. These people will hear the horrible words in the gospel of Matthew: ‘I do not know you’ and they are not allowed to enter the Kingdom of God.

My dear brothers and sisters, as you are faithful in daily masses and devotions, let us also do our good works outside this church. Let us act on the Word of God by being merciful, compassionate, and loving to those people around us, people who need our care and service. Let us live our faith by acting on it. Let us pray therefore in this Eucharist that we may have faith like the mustard seed that grows into a tree and manifest it by the service and good works we render to our brothers and sisters.

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<sup>3</sup> [livingspace.sacredspace.ie](http://livingspace.sacredspace.ie)