

Lord, increase our faith

Why are the disciples seeking this?

If we read the previous part of the Gospel

We see that just before this request

Jesus was teaching about forgiveness

**We should be familiar with Jesus' teaching on how often we
must forgive**

Peter asks: 7 times?

And Jesus replies not 7 times

But 7 times 70 times, an infinite amount

Humanly, this cannot be done

It can only be done one way

With God's grace

Forgiveness and faith are intimately related

What is this faith that can move mountains?

Often we think of our faith as having to do with ourselves

But if this is the case

We are really just feeding the ego

We are setting ourselves up with pride

At its core, faith is not about us

It is about God

It is a virtue

And, as St Thomas Aquinas teaches, a virtue is a habit

A habit that can be built up and strengthened

Or a habit that can atrophy and become weaker

Even to the point of vanishing completely

As I was preparing for this week's homily

I came across a true story

The names are changed

But the facts remain

It is a simple story of faith and forgiveness

There was family that lost everything

Including one of their children

The oldest son was kidnapped

And after paying the ransom

An act that took all their material goods

The boy was still killed

This devastated the family

Years later, when the youngest child was preparing for confirmation

The class was asked what part of the Mass meant the most to them

For her, it was the Creed

When we recall our faith in the Holy Trinity

And the gift of faith

When asked why, she told her story

About how this kidnapping and murder affected her and her family

And how they never could quite get over it

Then one day a man appeared at their door

Admitting he was the one responsible

He asked for forgiveness because he had only a short time to live

Understandably the father wanted nothing to do with this man

The older brother refused to even acknowledge his request

Her sister spoke of a desire the man suffer a horrific death

To pay for what he had done

This turmoil went on for days

But the mother kept silent

Listening to everything that was being said

One night, after listening to these things once again

The mother got up from the table and went into her room

Coming out after a bit, she sat with her family

In a quiet, broken voice, she began

I believe in God, the Father Almighty

Creator of heaven and earth

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord

Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit

Born of the Virgin Mary,

Suffered under Pontius Pilate;

Was crucified, died and was buried

He descended into hell

On the third day rose again

He ascended into heaven

Is seated at the right hand of God the Almighty

From thence he shall come to judge the dead

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church

The communion of saints

Here her voice failed before continuing

The forgiveness of sins

Then a bit louder: *I believe in the forgiveness of sins*

Forcefully a third time: *I believe in the forgiveness of sins*

And she told her family

Forgive if you want to be reunited with our beloved son

Forgive if you want to take part in the resurrection of the body

Forgive if you want to enjoy life everlasting

This faith was not about this mother

It is a faith that is beyond human understanding

It is a faith that is a gift from God

Perhaps this story will change the way we pray the Creed

The way we live and forgive

Because this is a faith that can move mountains