

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Evidence of Things Unseen Third Week in Ordinary Time Saturday, January 28, 2017
8:15 AM **Heb 11:1-2, 8-19; Mk 4:35-41** St. Thomas Aquinas, priest and Doctor of the
Church (We need to be clear about the presence of God and the power of God and the
guidance that God gives us.)

The theme of today's two readings is of course faith. Jesus says to his disciples, **“Do you not yet have faith?”**

Now faith means many things in many different contexts. **Here faith means a kind of peace within, an absence of anxiety and fear.** Faith is an inner peace that excludes anxiety and fear. That's one aspect of faith. **It is derived of course from having a personal relationship with God, knowing God.** And Jesus rebukes his disciples because it's already been offered. It would be senseless to rebuke someone for not having faith if it hadn't been offered, but it was. **His very presence was constantly drawing people into the presence of God, and they apparently weren't accepting the invitation** or acknowledging the invitation or going along with the invitation.

The first reading from **Hebrews says, “Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen”**—**another aspect of faith, realization.** This takes place within our consciousness, within our mind. **We start to realize what is hoped for.** We can hope for things that are completely far off. In that case hope is almost the same thing as wishing. But faith is not wishful thinking. It's realizing what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen. **So faith already serves as a kind of proof of those things that are not visible.** Ordinarily people believe things or accept things that are shown to them. In science there are various ways of verifying theories. Well, this is saying that faith is a kind of verification of things unseen. But of course **it's very personal.** It can't be put into a book. If you put it in a book, you are just talking about your own personal experience. It can be shared, and it should be shared with others, but,

again, it can't be forced upon them because it is in the nature of the personal and **it relates into a personal relationship with God**, something that has to be voluntarily accepted and nurtured and developed.

So later on this letter talks about **faith being a conviction**. Now conviction is like evidence. It's something deep within us. But it is not the same thing as certainty. When we have a conviction about something **we hold it to be true, but we are not absolutely certain**. St. Paul speaks about this when he says, "We walk by faith, not by sight." Sight and certainty go together, but faith is different. Faith is about what is unseen. **It's evidence of things unseen. It's realizations of things yet hoped for**. If we hope for it, well, then it's not exactly in front of us. We don't actually possess it yet.

So these are different aspects of faith, and they all are things we need to think about as we deal day by day with the issues that come up, because our boat, so to speak, is also tossed by waves, and we also ship water, and we also are heading into headwinds. And **we need to be clear about the presence of God and the power of God and the guidance that God gives us**. We have to accept as evidence things that are not actually seen. We have to be able to have convictions about things we cannot prove. And we have to let our lives be the witness to the confidence that dispels anxiety and fear. Then we are really working with God, and we are really disciples and witnesses to the ends of the earth.