

The believer's Sense of Faith (*sensus fidei* in Latin)

2011/9/11 - Mie Region South Block Visitation

(This refers to the individual's Sense of Faith (*sensus fidei fidelium*), rather than to the Sense of Faith of the whole body of the faithful, which is called *sensus fidelium*)

- **Two meanings of the individual's Sense of Faith:**

- 1) Sense of Faith as an **ability**:

- the faculty, power, capacity, possibility given to baptized people by the Holy Spirit to perceive spiritual matters, without denying the Holy Spirit's action in others.
 - the believer's ability to receive and accept God's saving action in their lives.
 - each person's unique ability to discover Divine Salvation in the events of daily life.
 - in the Holy Spirit and through Christ, the capacity to perceive and understand how God's hand is at work in daily life.
 - The ability to understand, interpret and apply in our lives what God reveals to us about himself.

- 2) Sense of Faith as **understanding**:

- As well as the ability, each one's Sense of Faith shows how God's revelation has been understood, and then when we express this to others it becomes a sign of our knowledge of the Faith.

- The Sense of Faith evolves within the circle of interpretative understanding, the interaction of both “believed Faith” (each individual's Faith response to God's self-communication) and “Faith that should be believed” (assent to the content of Faith as taught by the Church).
- The Sense of Faith gives us an awareness of encountering God, which is at the same time an experience of salvation. The encounter with God brings about salvation. A believer united to Christ concretely experiences Revelation and Salvation, each person in their own unique way.
- By one's Sense of Faith the “Power of the Gospel” shines out in the believer's daily social life. This is the witness of Faith, manifested in a person's way of living.

11 Distinctive features of the Sense of Faith

① **What do you believe about God?** (1. *Personal aspect of the Sense of Faith*)

Responding to God's call and believing in God's love and compassion.

Entrusting ourselves to God by our encounter with Christ in the Holy Spirit.

② **Do you feel at all times called by God?** (2. *Sense of Faith as Discovery*)

God gives people the ability to be aware of Faith which comes from the Holy Spirit.

We should always be attentive to this invitation and determined to accept it.

③ **Are you close to God who cannot be seen?** (3. *Sense of Faith as Recognition*)

The Sense of Faith is like the eye of the heart, ability to "see" what cannot be seen.

By being sensitive to various symbols, visible signs and words, in the reality of daily life, we can come close to God who cannot be seen.

④ **Is Christ present in our Faith?** (4. *Sense of Faith as Knowledge*)

There can be no Christian Faith if Christ is excluded. In the Eucharistic Prayer at Mass we pray "through Him, with Him and in Him".

- **Through Christ:** is how the Christian Faith perceives and knows God as Father.
- **With Christ:** is how we believe in God the Father and entrust ourselves to Him.
- **In Christ:** through the Holy Spirit we live in Christ and are united to Him.

⑤ **Is the Mass the Centre of your Faith?** (5. *Sense of Faith is Sacramental*)

Because we experience in the Mass an encounter with Christ who cannot be seen, so that we in turn can become visible signs of God's invisible grace, we must ask ourselves "are taking part properly and with enthusiasm in the Mass as the centre of our faith lives?"

⑥ **Is your Faith reflected in your daily life?** (6. *Sense of Faith in Practical sense*)

We should be very aware and careful about the gap that occurs between faith and life.

Faith has to be applied to daily life. Japanese can learn from Filipinos and Latin Americans for whom Faith has always been part of themselves and their lives, and whose countries have had historical links with Catholicism.

- ⑦ **Is your Faith Living the Peace of God.** (7. *Sense of faith as **Redemptive***)
 Faith gives clear guidance to our lives. When faced with trials of faith do we place our hope in God who is always faithful?
- ⑧ **Is your Faith “the Story of your life?”** (8. *Sense of Faith brings **Integration***)
 Faith synthesizes life into a meaningful story by intertwining past and present. God reveals himself in the “story of my life”. We can draw strength to live, by accepting present difficulties and believing the “promise” of liberation from death.
- ⑨ **Maybe your Faith is too complacent?** (9. ***Critical** aspect*)
 Might your Faith be too self-centered, mostly calling on God for consolation? The way we believe needs constant discernment, according to Gospel criteria.
- ⑩ **Do you live your faith with Fellow-Believers?** (10. ***Community** aspect*)
 Christian faith is only possible by “believing together”.
 Faith is strengthened and deepened by fellowship in the community.
- ⑪ **Does your Faith serve the Spirit of Christ?** (11. ***Holy Spirit and Sense of Faith***)
 All sectors of the Church, exist in order to build up the Church as Body of Christ, serving the Spirit of Christ who constantly gives life to the Church.