

## Homily for 32<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

The inspiring story of Eric Little was made famous in the movie “Chariots of Fire.” It is the chronicle of a young athlete who preferred to honor the Lord than to be honored by the Olympics. He would eventually lose his life as a missionary in China.

Early in the movie there is a scene as crowds gather around the victorious Eric Little after winning an important race. He takes this moment not only to speak but also to preach. This is what he says: “You came to see a race today...to see someone win. But I want you to do more than just watch a race. I want you to take part in it. Faith is like running a race. It’s hard and requires concentration of will and energy of soul. ...And where does the power come from to see the race to its completion. It comes from within. Jesus says: Behold the kingdom of God is within you. If you commit yourself to the love of God...that is how you run a great race.”

Living faith, not just professing faith, is the call of today’s readings. The seven brothers in the book of Maccabees witness to the faith as they refuse to worship a false god. They stood by their faith to the end.

Saint Paul prays that his readers may have the faith that strengthens them for every good work. And Jesus, in response to a group of hypocritical Pharisees, makes it clear that faith teaches us that only in God do we find true life.

I have heard so many people say how much they admire and love our new Holy Father, Pope Francis. But if all we do is admire the man then we have missed what the man is all about. Over and over again he has begged us to do more than listen to the Word of God. He has encouraged us to not just “watch the race” but also to “take part in the race.” He has taught us that to live in God is to live for others.

The Word of God and our Holy Father beg us to become a Culture of Good Samaritans, of living witnesses to the faith. We live the faith by the compassion we show to others, the forgiveness we give to each other, and our willingness to serve the needs of the poor and those who have so much less than we have. We must become the voice for those who experience the injustice of today’s world. We must leave the shallow waters of just taking care of ourselves and plunge into the deeper waters of concern for bringing Christ to the world in which we live.

To live the faith, to run the race, is easier said than done. But the strength to do this comes from the power of God that lies within each

one of us. To live the faith, to witness to the faith, is to live for God and to act for others who are in pain and who seek our help.