



21. February 2026
LENTEN SPIRITUAL RETREAT
Day 4: “Faith unleashes God's work”

Today, on the fourth day of our Lenten journey, the Lord—through the prophet Isaiah—again emphasizes the importance of acting justly toward our neighbor and keeping His commandments. If we do so, true peace will enter our souls, and what the reading promises will come to pass:

“You shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters fail not (...). then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth” (Is 58:11b, 14a).

Indeed, only righteous conduct and obedience to God's commandments bring true peace to the human person and enable him, in turn, to become an “instrument of peace.” If we live in God's grace—or, in the words of the prophet Isaiah, if we are a “well-watered garden”—then we will also bear good fruit. On the other hand, how could there be peace if, because of sin, we live in inner contradiction and opposition to God? That is why the call to conversion is always a priority, whether we have strayed completely from the path, do not know God, or have neglected to follow Christ and have not responded sufficiently to the grace entrusted to us.

Today's Gospel (Mk 6:47–56) presents us with the One we want to follow. Jesus is on the shore of the Sea of Galilee and sees His disciples struggling against the headwind. So He walks on the sea to help them. At first, the disciples do not recognize Him and are frightened, thinking He is a ghost. But Jesus says to them, *“Take heart, it is I; have no fear.”* And he got into the boat with them and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.” (vv. 50b–52)

What was the hardness of heart of the disciples?

Just before this scene, they had witnessed the miraculous multiplication of the loaves with which Jesus fed a large crowd (Mk 6:34–44). This sign should have been enough for them to grasp more deeply the glory of the Lord and to take it into their hearts as a fundamental truth.

The light that shone in their Master and Lord—for whom nothing is impossible—

wanted to enlighten them. But this light was clouded by their unbelief or lack of faith. To put it in biblical language, “their hearts were hardened.” The Gospels repeatedly insist that the fruit the Lord expects from us in response to the signs and miracles He performs is an increase in our faith. Without a doubt, Jesus wants to find great faith in us.

Why is faith so important? The reasons are many, but today I would like to focus on one that can give wings to our entire spiritual life and our missionary task. We know that God spares no effort to lead human beings back to their eternal home and save them from all their wanderings and miseries. However, He does not do it alone. In addition to all His heavenly helpers, our Father has chosen men and women who still live in this world as His collaborators. The more they believe and trust in Him, the more easily He can accomplish His work in them and through them.

Faith, as a theological virtue, is, so to speak, the open door through which God can enter and draw us into His plan of salvation. The stronger the faith, the greater the works it can accomplish. And these works should become increasingly natural for believers, for divine reality should not be foreign to us; rather, we must act within it and from it.

When the Lord got into the boat with His disciples, the wind calmed down as naturally as the loaves had been multiplied a little earlier; as naturally as, later on, the sick who came to Him would be healed.

“Wherever he came, in villages, cities, or country, they laid the sick in the market places, and besought him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment; and as many as touched it were made well.” (v. 56).

What can we draw from these brief reflections for our lives?

Good works and faithful observance of the Lord’s commandments—living in a state of grace—allow God to make us a “well-watered garden,” a wellspring of His grace.

Great faith allows God's works and life to penetrate us in such a way that we can naturally participate in the authority He entrusts to us. This faith frees us from the blindness of the heart, enabling us to recognize God at work everywhere—in great things and in the simplest things. The more natural this becomes for us, the more God will be able to act through us and make us His witnesses. Then signs and miracles may also accompany us. Without detracting from the splendor of God's work, His

manifestations will become natural to us. We can and must rely on His intervention—whether in turbulent times with headwinds, in healing or helping a sick person, or in moments of personal anguish and tribulation.

Thus, the flower of today's meditation is the plea to our Father to heal us of all blindness so that we may recognize His glory and act in it.

Meditation on the reading of the day: <https://en.elijamission.net/2022/03/05/>

Meditation on the Gospel of the day: <https://en.elijamission.net/2021/02/20/>