

The Bishop's Message
November 2009

Faith and Action

“Put your money where your mouth is,” St. James says in so many words in his Epistle. In our culture where action is regarded as a virtue, we might think that there would be overwhelming agreement with St. James' thesis that faith is nothing unless it produces works. The fact is that people often talk about their faith, but so often do very little if anything about it.

This is a familiar matter, and it has to do with conviction. We probably know persons who, though vocal and passionate about any given issue, cannot be found when the work is to be done. There are those who talk courageously in small gatherings, but don't say a word in large ones. “Words are cheap,” the old saying goes and, unfortunately, it is too often true.

But it needn't be true. Words, indeed, are powerful -- written or spoken! We know that if we use them carelessly or superficially, they can be even dangerous.

As Christians, we are aware that the words of our Faith are not merely words. Rather, they articulate what stems out of the experience of the Church and the depths of our souls. Our words of faith express what God has done and is doing among His people.

St. James' words speak directly to us today, particularly as we have settled into another Church program year, and now gear up to consider our future commitment to Christ's work through our various congregations and the Diocese of Springfield and prepare for the many activities surrounding Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas. St. James' is admonishing those who speak in the abstract about their faith, but who clearly were not practicing it. Concerned about such “Lip-service Christianity,” he exhorts his readers to put their faith into action. Today his words powerfully convict us whenever we seek to be Christians in name only, or when we recite the Creeds without conviction.

May each of us be challenged by St. James' words to re-explore the grounds of our faith. By doing so, may we to recommit ourselves to Christ and His work permitting Him to act in and through us.

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