

## CHRISTIANS' ACTIONS ARE MOTIVATED BY CHRISTIAN FAITH

Belief is one of the things that influence peoples' actions a lot. Our belief plays an important role in our way of life most especially in our relationship with others. People react differently to the same situation because of their different beliefs. As erroneous beliefs mislead people and breed crises in the world, good beliefs make people live as God wanted us to live and create a favorable environment for people to live peacefully and happily. We are Christians today because we believe in Jesus Christ and His teachings. To be a true Christian all or most of our actions should be influenced by the teachings and commands of Jesus Christ. At the 77TH United Nations General Assembly held in New York this year, I observed how individual beliefs influenced their debates or presentations. Some Christian world leaders postulated that love, justice, and equity are needed for tackling the crises and challenges bedeviling our earth. **LOVE, JUSTICE, AND EQUITY ARE AMONG THE CORE OF OUR CHRISTIAN VALUES AND THE MAIN POINTS OF JESUS' TEACHINGS AND COMMANDS.** The global pandemic, civil unrest most especially the Russian-Ukraine war, and injustices at present woke our world leaders from their slumber to think about the best way to end or reduce the global crises. With the thought of the present crises and evils in our world, you will understand the type of environment Prophet Habakkuk found himself in that made him in today's first reading cry out to God. Prophet Habakkuk cried out, "how long, O Lord? I cry for help, but you do not listen. I cry out to you, "Violence" but you do not intervene, why do you let me see ruin; why must I look at misery? Destruction and violence are before me" (Habakkuk 1:2-3). The prophet believed that God could end the injustice, misery, and violence experienced at that time but was worried about why God had not done that or why He allowed him to experience them. In one way or another, we have asked God why He keeps quiet or fails to do something when evils are being done or perpetrated on a daily basis in our societies. Asking the question expresses our faith, at least we believe that God can do something positive about the situation and through our questions, we are praying or asking Him to do something in our favor. Many people asked the same question at the beginning of the recent pandemic, and some are still asking God either verbally or non-verbally why He still allows the wars or internal conflict going on in some parts of the world. God told Prophet Habakkuk to wait in faith or to hopefully be patient. Whatever God allows happening is for a reason and He does things His own way which is sometimes different from ours. In the face of challenges, all we need to do is to be patient, persevere, pray, and hope for better

days. Doing these shows our faith. The apostles after witnessing the mighty works which Jesus did and His zealousness in preaching the Gospel, in the Gospel reading today (Luke 17:5-10), asked Jesus to increase their faith. In response, Jesus made it clear that one's size of faith does not matter but that we should express the faith we have through actions. Jesus told His apostles that even if their faith was as small as a mustard seed, they could command a mulberry tree to uproot and be replanted. Faith is like a small seed. If you plant it, it will grow to produce fruit but if you keep it dormant, it will remain there or decay without producing any fruit. Listening to Jesus' words whether we are comfortable with them or not, believing that Jesus cares for us, and trying to do what He tells us, strengthens our faith, and makes it grow. ONE'S FAITH IS PERCEIVED THROUGH THE PERSON'S ACTIONS. As a minister of the Gospel, I express my faith by preaching Jesus' teachings and commands without alteration and by trying to live out the Gospel message. In the diaconate ordination, God through the ordaining prelate places the Book of the Gospels in the hands of the candidates and says, "Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you have become. Believe what you read, teach what you believe, and practice what you teach." With this mandate, teaching the Gospel message and living it out becomes the job of deacons and priests and a way of expressing our faith. We as followers of Christ need to profess our faith by trying to live out the teaching and commands of Jesus Christ. MOST TIMES WE WANT GOD TO DO WHAT WE ASK HIM TO DO FOR US, BUT HOW OFTEN DO WE STRIVE TO LOVE GOD BY DOING WHAT JESUS TELLS US? We express our faith in Jesus by trying to do what He tells us to do in the Gospels. May God help us in doing His will, Amen.