



# Allocutio



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## Allocutio: Faith

As we begin this Year of Faith it will be useful to ask what is faith? It has something to do with the way we look at things and interact with life. Faith is about seeing beyond the merely visible, beyond the experiences of the senses. It tells us that there is something bigger than what we see. It tells us that we are part of something bigger, that there is a design behind life. Anybody following the recent developments in Astronomy will be only too aware of the gigantic size of our Universe and how small we are in it. But faith also comforts us with assurance that we are in existence because we are loved and wanted. We are part of some plan that has a final destiny to which we are being invited. Our job, and this is what makes faith faith, is to trust that plan and design and to trust the love that is behind it.

Certainly there is something gigantic going on. Before I was born others were there. Before I was born history already had a long span. I am the recipient of some evolution or process that has been taking place. I am not the author of all that is. I am part of something bigger. And after I am gone having left my footprint this gigantic world will remain.

And I find myself in a world not just made up of galaxies and stars, atoms and molecules that have been there for billions of light years but in a wonderful world of varied life wherein things propagate and have young and grow and interact. Life too is a mystery and a wonder. We humans too enter onto this stage of planet earth and grow and interact with it. We have made great strides in science and technology, in medicine and communications, showing something classy about us if I can put it that way. Whatever is behind the great plan that has led the world this far it seems we humans have entered the plan and are going to have a say in its outcome. But it is bigger than us. What faith does is not only alert us to the bigger reality shows us that we are co-workers with the chief architect or engineer.

There are at least two signs that the Architect is some kind of a person with whom we can dialogue. The first is that we ourselves have a capacity to look into another's eyes and have very deep communication with another. But this must be a reflection or expression of the Great One for if it was not in Him or Her it would not have appeared in our world. So He or She must be capable of engagement with.

The second is the communication of this person with us as a human family through his special agents, like Abraham, Moses and the saints but above all through Jesus. And Jesus has asked us and taught us to have a real faith and trust in the one he called "Our Father". He tells us that in our heavenly Father's eyes we are held in special regard. He himself believed that to such an extent, that he was the beloved Son, that it gave him strength to walk through a horror event in his life when he was taken and put through dreadful torture before he died, trusting to the very end. And his faith was vindicated in the Resurrection.

As you may have heard hundreds of planets have been discovered recently around other star systems. And last week they announced another planet which has all the hallmarks of being potential for life. It will not surprise me at all when we find life out there somewhere although I think by the time it is found my short span here will have run its course. Even if it turns out that



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there are other intelligent creatures out there what Jesus has come to say to us is that we are special in the eyes of the Great one, the supreme Architect, the Creator. And the great Architect loves us not just as a human family but as individuals. Jesus teaches us that we are of more value than hundreds of sparrows, that our heavenly Father holds us in the palms of his hands and that better than we do ourselves he knows when the hairs fall from our heads.

Faith is about trusting in this God who loves us. It is about taking the risk of engaging with him personally and tapping into that love. Here is the astonishing thing. God has an open door of welcome for everyone. And each of us can call at that door and enter and sit down with this God individually and personally and open up to him. And he sits and listens. And I believe he does hear and does answer. Our problem is that while he knows the bigger plan we do not always see it and can be impatient with him or think he has let us down. What Jesus says is: trust, have faith.

But there is more to the relationship of faith than just going into him and asking for help. If you want he is open to a much deeper relationship, one of great intimacy where both can enjoy each other's company. Like any deep relationship we have to be ready for a bumpy ride at times if you take that road. Jesus will say to us, "Look at what I went through but my life death and Resurrection proves it. Just have faith!"

This Year of Faith is about thinking about that faith and also about entering into a journey of faith with God or, if already there in a journey, of deepening it. There is one other thing we have to remember: sin is real, human weakness is real, anxiety can take over and lead us to do things that are not the best. The news each day speaks of the broken human condition everywhere. But faith tells us that despite all this and despite our worst, the great loving God remains strong and our call, even when things are at their darkest, is to trust and stay in there. That is all part of the faith journey.

There is no better a person as a model in all this than Our Lady who walked a journey of deep faith. Two days ago we celebrated her presentation in the Temple when she offered her service to God as a young girl in the Temple. In faith she conceived Jesus, in faith she entrusted her care to Joseph who brought her to Bethlehem and then down to Egypt and back to Nazareth. In Nazareth she lived a quiet life of faith. But it is at the foot of the Cross that she lived faith to an exceptional level but in her joy over the Resurrection she learnt in a most extraordinary way the meaning of Elizabeth's words, "Blessed is she who believed that that the promises made to her by the Lord would be fulfilled". Let us ask from her the graces to have a real and true faith.

Amen.

Fr Paul Churchill