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## Father Cantalamessa on the Leap of Faith

### Pontifical Household Preacher Comments on Sunday's Readings

ROME, OCT. 5, 2007 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Here is a translation of a commentary by the Pontifical Household preacher, Capuchin Father Raniero Cantalamessa, on the readings from this Sunday's liturgy.

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Increase Our Faith

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4; 2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14; Luke 17:5-10

This Sunday's Gospel begins with the apostles asking Jesus: "Increase our faith!"

Instead of satisfying their desire, Jesus seems to want to make it grow further. He says: "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed ..."

Without a doubt, faith is the dominant theme this Sunday. We hear about it also in the first reading, in the celebrated line of Habakkuk, taken up again by St. Paul in his Letter to the Romans: "The just shall live by faith" (1:17).

Faith has a few different meanings. This time I would like to reflect on the more common and elementary understanding of faith: believing or not believing in God.

This is not the faith by which one decides whether one is Catholic or Protestant, Christian or Muslim, but the faith by which one decides whether one is a believer or a nonbeliever, believer or atheist. A Scripture text says: "Those who come to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). This is the first step of faith, without it, we cannot take the other steps.

To speak of faith in such a general way we cannot base ourselves only on the Bible since it only has validity for Christians and, in part, for Jews, but not for anyone else. It is fortunate for us that God wrote two "books": One is the Bible, the other is creation. The one is composed of letters and words, the other of things.

Not everyone knows or is able to read the book of Scripture; but everyone, from every place and culture, can read the book of creation. "The heavens tell of the glory of God and the firmament declares the work of his hands" (Psalm 19:2). Paul writes: "Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be understood and perceived in what he has made" (Romans 1:20).

It is urgent that we show how unfounded the opinion is that says that science has already liquidated the problem and exhaustively explained the world without any need to invoke the idea of a reality beyond it called God. In a certain sense, today science brings us closer to faith in a creator than in the past.

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Let us consider the famous theory that explains the origin of the universe with the "big bang," the great explosion at the beginning. In a billionth of a billionth of a second, we go from one situation in which there is not yet anything, neither space nor time, to a situation in which time has begun, space exists, and, in an infinitesimal particle of matter, there is already, in potency, the whole subsequent universe of billions of galaxies, as we know it today.

One could say: "There is no sense in asking about what there was before that instant, because there is no 'before,' when time does not exist."

But I say: "How can we not ask that question!"

"Trying to go back behind the history of the cosmos," it will be said, "is like going through the pages of a large book starting at the end. Once we arrive at the beginning we see that the first page is missing."

I believe biblical revelation has something to tell us precisely about this first page. Science cannot be asked to declare on this "first page," which is outside time, but neither must science close the circle, making everyone think that everything is resolved.

There is no pretense of "demonstrating" God's existence, in the common understanding of this term. Here below we see as through a mirror, says St. Paul.

When a ray of light enters into a room, it is not the ray of light itself that is seen, but the dance of the dust that receives and reveals the light. It is the same with God: We do not see him directly, but as in a reflection, in the dance of things. This explains why God is not reached without the "leap" of faith.

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