The Apostles, who had left their former way of life behind in order to follow Jesus, still had a hard time understanding all He told them – and all He expected of them. In today’s Gospel, those closest to Him seem overwhelmed. Christ is asking them to trust Him, despite the fact that so much He says and does turns their old manner of looking at things upside down. The Twelve realize they need help. “The Apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith.’ The Lord replied, ‘If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, Be uprooted and planted in the sea, and it would obey you!’” (Luke 17:5-6). If the Apostles had felt they were out of their depth before these words, what did they experience after they heard them?

Perhaps they, like so many of us, had never grasped how vital it is for people to acknowledge their reliance on God. We generally do not like to feel dependent. We prefer to feel in charge. Yet we constantly count on family, friends, neighbors, employers, colleagues, and many strangers who provide various kinds of support just to help us get through the day. However, faith in God is something else again. God made everyone, every unique individual. He wants us to entrust ourselves to Him now and for eternity. The Son of God died exactly for this reason. When we say we are Catholics we mean more than accepting a creed, no matter how good and beautiful it is. We have to truly believe that God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – loves us and desires our love in return. Our faith should be our natural response to the love of the Creator-Savior-Comforter. This is the faith that eventually overwhelmed the Apostles and that they spread throughout the world. This is the faith that we must also share with all we meet, whether in person, in prayer, or in support of the Church’s missions. Faith is a gift. But no one can accept it until it is offered, and that is our task. A mustard seed of faith is no little thing. It changed the world two thousand years ago – and it keeps on changing it.

As we begin this month of October, declared an Extraordinary Missionary Month by Pope Francis, let us resolve to live and share our faith with joy, and to support those who do so half a world away.

For more about the Extraordinary Missionary Month and related resources, visit this website.

For resources for the celebration of World Mission Sunday, visit this website.