

A View from the Pew

by Deacon Greg Kandra

Small Wonder

My mother used to love to tell this story: It was New Year's Eve, 1948. The snow was falling, the wind was howling. And the man who would be my father showed up at her doorstep with a huge box in his arms, wrapped in colorful Christmas paper. What was this? A present? A week after Christmas?

She helped him inside, took his coat, and made him stomp his boots and shake off the snow. She poured some champagne and sat down to start unwrapping the box. When she opened it, she found inside a smaller box, also wrapped. She laughed and opened it. And inside was another smaller box, also wrapped. And so it went, each big box enclosing a smaller one, and a smaller one, until she found only one box left—a tiny thing just big enough to fit on the palm of her hand.

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And inside, there it was: her engagement ring.

Big things sometimes come in big packages. But the best things usually come in smaller ones.

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I don't know how you can possibly measure something as intangible as faith. It can't fit on a scale or in a jar. It's not something you can size up with a tape measure or ruler. You can't put it in a box or wrap it in paper.

It just is. We sense it when we have it. We can feel it when we have been given it.

And make no mistake: It is a gift. It arrives very often unseen and unbidden. God extends His hand to us, and in His hand is something wider and deeper and more expansive than the universe.

It is the belief in something better, the "evidence of things not seen."

Here, He says, is something that is literally incredible. Here is trust. Here is faith. Grab it. Take it. It's yours.

The fact is that faith doesn't need to be extravagant to be effective. In the Gospels, Jesus tells us that faith only has to be the size of a mustard seed. But from such seeds, miracles can grow. Mulberry bushes can be moved. The world can be transformed.

On a snowy winter night sixty years ago, a young woman opened a small and mysterious gift, and it transformed her world. It changed everything, and filled her life with love. From an object that was so small it fit in her hand, there grew a family, and a future.

All it took was a leap of love—and a leap of faith.

Small wonders hold great promise. Let's hold fast, then, to the small wonder that is faith. Nurture it. Help it to grow. It is a gift that keeps on giving.

And then, who knows? You just might move a mulberry tree—or even begin a family.

Remember this, when the year is new and the seed is small:

Great things may yet be in store.

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