

YEAR OF FAITH

Newsletter -no 5



Enter the Year of Faith no.35

What are the qualities of our Christian faith? The “Door of Faith” outlines eight qualities that belong to an adult faith. (*Door of Faith # 6*)

HOW TO USE BULLETIN - No. 5

We are not the first person to discover our Christian faith. We stand on the shoulders of many generations of women and men who have struggled, rejoiced, reflected and lived their own faith well. This is not an exercise on how we can discover the wheel.

This third bulletin is a brief summary that describes what our Christian faith looks like on the pavement. It must never be an ivory tower description of our faith.

No one lives all eight qualities with equal vigor.

Take the eight points of this bulletin and apply it to your own life. What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?



REFLECTIONS ON THE QUALITIES OF FAITH

i. Faith is individual

This is the easiest part for people to understand about their faith life. Religious faith is never doing all the right things such as jumping through all the religious hoops.

It must become a part of who we are. When we grew up as children our Mother did not follow a cook book. She lived and cooked out of who she was as a person. Her cooking skills and her sense of pride as a cook came out of long practice.

There were so many moments when the food she prepared was her. When we sat down to eat as her children we were sharing a part of her very life.

So too with our religious faith. It must not be a part of our life that we click into from time to time but rather it must come out of our very flesh and bones.

Our life with Jesus Christ must be an integral part of our life. What we do, how we speak act comes out of our commitment to follow Christ in all things.

The heritage of all believers needs to be confirmed, understood and explored ever anew

2. Faith is collective

No one can have faith in Jesus Christ all on their own. It did not come to us as something that we discovered with our own efforts.

It was given to us through the witness, the teaching and the prayer of the people of the Church. It is the faith of the much larger reality which is the Church (i.e., the people who share and live the life of Jesus).

We are always a believer within the people of the Church. We share a common faith, a common experience of the redemption that Christ has brought about within humanity.

When we stand each Sunday and profess, "I believe in the holy catholic Church" may our eyes circle around to these people and be thankful for the faith we all share together.



I have spoken of the need to rediscover the journey of faith so as to shed ever clearer light on the joy and renewed enthusiasm of the encounter with Christ. *Pope Benedict XVI*

The renewal of the Church is also achieved through the witness offered by the lives of believers: by their very existence in the world, Christians are called to radiate the word of truth that the Lord Jesus has left us.
(The Door of Faith # 6)



We want to celebrate this Year in a worthy and fruitful manner.

(The Door of Faith #8)

The Church, 'like a stranger in a foreign land, presses forward amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God', announcing the cross and death of the Lord until he comes (cf. 1 Cor 11:26).

(The Door of Faith # 6)

HOW DO OTHERS SEE YOUR FAITH?

3. Faith is free

No one can ever command faith to happen. It is always a gift from God who lifts each person up to believe and follow Christ.

If we could earn it by our own efforts we could demand that God do what we wanted.

Just the opposite happens. God freely gives the gift of faith to those who are seeking God and those who are just absent minded about the things of God.

If faith is truly a gift then the proper response will be of gratitude towards God and our fellow human beings. Can we ever be thankful enough about what we have received from God?

4. Faith is conscious

This is not a passive part of our life like a stone that just sits put on the roadside for years and years. We know in whom we believe and what Jesus is accomplishing among us today.

When it is conscious we seek to have it work throughout our lives. Our faith has definite consequences on how we treat people who are different from ourselves and people who are suffering or neglected.

Faith makes a distinct difference to how we live.

5. Faith is inward

Faith lives within our very person. We give it attention in our prayer and our silences. We can feel how it challenges us and those moments where it supports us through the dark days of the year.

6. Faith is outward

Faith in Christ has a face. You can read it..... and it is your face. The sure sign that we believe is how we love (i.e., pour out of life in sharing) one another. Faith is expressed through words but fleshed out in our actions. It is our actions that speak loud and clearly.

But by the power of the risen Lord it [the Church] is given strength to overcome, in patience and in love, its sorrow and its difficulties, both those that are from within and those that are from without, so that it may reveal in the world, faithfully, although with shadows, the mystery of its Lord until, in the end, it shall be manifested in full light."

Door of Faith # 6

"To the extent that he freely cooperates, man's thoughts and affections, mentality and conduct are slowly purified and transformed, on a journey that is never completely finished in this life."

Door of Faith # 6



It is the love of Christ that fills our hearts and impels us to evangelize

Today as in the past, he sends us through the highways of the world to proclaim his Gospel to all the peoples of the earth (cf. Mt 28:19).

7. Faith is humble

To have humility in our life of faith is to be like a seventeen year old playing basketball and looking down and seeing that his shoe lace is dangling -- seven inches long!

Do you ever run with the basketball....and very carefully!

We are not perfect. We have not been fully transformed into the likeness of Christ. We sin! We hurt other people! We need more conversion.

Sincere faith means to run knowing how long your shoe lace actually is!

8. Faith is frank

Faith gives us eyes to see the truth. We are given the insight to see the good that God the Father sees in each person.

We are also given a sense to see what is evil and what is not of God. Faith gives us courage to identify and name the evil that is within our society, our world, and horrors, the evil within ourselves!

Faith is to give us the divine way of seeing and living. It moves us to act in the way that God would act, to work in the ways that God works.

Which of the eight qualities of faith most describes your life of faith? What thoughts do you have about this?

My Breastplate

Christ be with me,
Christ within me,
Christ behind me,
Christ before me,
Christ beside me,
Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ in quiet,
Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

St. Patrick.



How has Jesus helped you in your life of faith?