

YEAR OF FAITH

Newsletter -no 12



Enter the Year of Faith no. 12

A Christian may never think of belief as a private act.

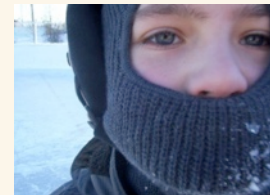
HOW TO USE BULLETIN No. 12

Many adult Christians now conclude that the greatest help to their faith was to recognize that their faith matured, not through the pages where the doctrine is written, but by how their mentors lived their faith.

One man quietly admitted that he grew up with a very impatient pastor. "He would just knock down any excuse you put forward. When he thought that you should be helping with our local food bank he just expected you to adjust your program and help with the other volunteers."

Such persons make faith in Jesus Christ come alive. Working with others at the food bank makes our faith touchable. You can become a player in the event of faith.

This bulletin will try to lead you to see that our faith is lived on the pavement and in public.



GOD GIVES THE GIFT OF FAITH.....WE SAY YES

1. Faith can only be received as a gift given by God and accepted by human beings. It is a two way affair.

“Saint Luke [the Gospel writer] teaches that knowing the content to be believed is not sufficient unless the heart, the authentic sacred space within the person, is opened by grace that allows the eyes to see below the surface and to understand that what has been

proclaimed is the word of God.” *(The Door of Faith # 10)*

Just sitting in a classroom and knowing the doctrines of our faith with our intellect will never produce faith.

Only when it becomes a living part of our person does our faith come alive. Every human being is capable of receiving the faith.

Faith is lived within our hearts, within our blood veins and in the works of our hands.

Knowledge of the content of faith is essential for giving one's own assent, that is to say for adhering fully with intellect and will to what the Church proposes *The Door of Faith # 10*

2. There are no lone ranger believers.

What would you do if you did not have the love and support of your family?

The wise seventy-seven year old looked at me and bluntly said: "You die!"

No more discussion. If you are not loved and supported and if you do not love and support your family (and that can be a broad sense of family), just stop living today!

Our faith can only thrive and grow with others. We need the people of the Church to keep us walking with Jesus Christ. They keep us honest in our prayer life. They keep us pointed in the right direction by their guidance.

It is a contradiction in terms to say 'I believe but I do not need anyone else to believe!'



Profession of faith is an act both personal and communitarian. (The Door of Faith #10)

Faith is choosing to stand with the Lord so as to live with him. This "standing with him" points towards an understanding of the reasons for believing.

(The Door of Faith #10)



You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden...let your light shine before others." (Matthew 5, 14-15)

Faith, precisely because it is a free act, also demands social responsibility for what one believes. The Church on the day of Pentecost demonstrates with utter clarity this public dimension of believing and proclaiming one's faith fearlessly to every person. (The Door of Faith # 8)

YOU NEVER LEARNED TO RIDE THE BIKE ALL BY YOURSELF. YOU CAN NEVER LEARN YOUR FAITH ALL BY YOURSELF!

RECEIVE WHAT OTHERS WILL GIVE TO YOUR FAITH LIFE

It is the Church that is the primary subject of faith. In the faith of the Christian community, each individual receives baptism, an effective sign of entry into the people of believers in order to obtain salvation.

Door of Faith # 10



Knowledge of faith opens a door into the fullness of the saving mystery revealed by God. The giving of assent implies that, when we believe, we freely accept the whole mystery of faith, because the guarantor of its truth is God who reveals himself and allows us to know his mystery of love. *Door of Faith # 10*

3. Faith demands social responsibility for what one believes.

One of our parishioners shared with us how she grew up in the Church. "We lived in a parish where the front door of the church looked directly into the front door of the nursing home.

"Well, my Mother just marched herself and her children every single Sunday out of the Church door and into the nursing home. She would spend about an hour visiting, telling stories and listening to the elderly residents.

"What a good way to learn how to live your faith but I can imagine that it was difficult with you are dealing with bored twelve and thirteen year olds. But now I am so glad that her actions told me that prayer always leads to service.

"Prayer and worship always leads to compassion for others."

The gift of faith is never for our self-enhancement. Faith lived through the dedication of believers is given for the world. Through our faith we are to bring the world to a stronger practice of social justice, a deeper love and respect for all persons and a commitment to care for the earth and all future generations on this planet.

1. Receive their struggles to turn away from sin and all negative attitudes. They have struggled to make the death to sin which they received in their baptism, concrete in daily life.

Their struggles are encouragement to us as we too turn away from all sin. It is in their weaknesses that we can discover the power and strength that Jesus actually gives us.

2. Open your eyes to the good example that your fellow believers give you. It may be the patience that your aged aunt shows her eighty nine year old husband as he struggles with his dementia. Is not the hand of God living in your aunt?

3. See the hand of God moving within your fellow parishioner who will spend hours of quiet time with dying people who do not have any one else to be with them.

The only person who sees this goodness is God. But this quiet witness indicates how powerful God is within this world.

The generosity of these people speaks volumes of what God is like. Can we receive this

“Man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved” (Rom 10:10). The heart indicates that the first act by which one comes to faith is God’s gift and the action of grace which acts and transforms the person deep within”

Door of Faith # 10



4. Faith is for mission

We begin to understand our faith when we think of our parish community as a dispatching station. Jesus never planned to have his disciples sit around in comfortable religious circles.

He came to heal the world of sin, indifference and selfishness. Now believers share in this same mission and purpose.

Each believer is dispatched to bring a better understanding and healing among the people they live with today.

Where does your parish community lead you to witness and share your faith with people who are indifferent to our Christian faith?

Who witnessed to you what it means to follow Jesus as one of his disciples?

A Prayer for the World

Let the rain come and wash away the ancient grudges, the bitter hatreds held and nurtured over generations. Let the rain wash away the memory of the hurt, the neglect.

Then let the sun come out and fill the sky with rainbows. Let the warmth of the sun heal us wherever we are broken.

Let it burn away the fog so that we can see each other clearly. So that we can see beyond labels, beyond accents, gender or skin colour. Let the warmth and brightness of the sun melt our selfishness.

So that we can share the joys and feel the sorrows of our neighbours. And let the light of the sun be so strong that we will see all people as our neighbours.

Let the earth, nourished by rain, bring forth flowers to surround us with beauty. And let the mountains teach our hearts to reach upward to heaven.

*Rabbi Harold S. Kushner
(Author of When Bad Things Happen to Good People)*

