

Faith as a Virtue

By Deacon Tim Sullivan

In our discussion of virtue, we will start with the three “theological” virtues: faith, hope and charity. It’s important for parents to instill in children these three virtues, which are the foundations not only of the other virtues but also for every aspect of life.

Faith, as the Catholic Catechism says, is “the virtue by which we believe in God and all that He has said and revealed to us, and that Holy Church proposes for our belief...By faith ‘man freely commits his entire self to God.’ For this reason the believer seeks to know and to do God’s will.”

The Catechism continues: “The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live on it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it...Service of and witness to the faith are necessary for salvation.”

Our children need to know that faith isn’t just a set of beliefs. It’s a way of life. Our beliefs lead to action and are integrated into everything we do.

Too many Catholics think faith is private, something we keep to ourselves. That is a false understanding. As said above, faith is to be shared. If our faith enriches our lives with wisdom and grace, wouldn’t we want other people to have it, too?

Our children are always watching us, curious to find out what impact our faith has on our lives. And they are very quick to spot situations where our actions are inconsistent with what we say we believe. So our Catholic faith must be authentic, active and visible. The biggest factor in the faith of children is the influence of their parents.

“Without faith, it is impossible to please God, for anyone who approaches God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him.” Hebrews 11:6