

Why Be Catholic?

By Deacon Tim Sullivan

If someone asks us why we're Catholic, what would we say? Do we have a good 2 or 3 sentence explanation for why our Catholic faith is important to us?

When I'm in a setting with Catholic parents, I often ask them why they want their children to be Catholic. The answers I get are 1. We've always been Catholic; 2. The Catholic Church was founded by Jesus and is the oldest church; 3. We have the pope. Then I ask them if they think their children would be excited by any of those answers.

I follow up by asking another question: "Do your children know from you how your Catholic faith has changed your life?" The response to this question so far has been complete silence.

My suggested answer to why I'm Catholic would be something like this: Jesus is the center of my life. My relationship with Him is deeper and richer in the Catholic Church than it would be in any other way or in any other place.

If our children knew that our lives were focused on Jesus and that we experienced grace and power from the relationship we have with Jesus through the Catholic Church, their interest in being and remaining Catholic would be greatly enhanced.

Faith requires an active prayer life, the highest expression of which is the Mass. If our children see that prayers are answered, they will learn that the life of faith is real, personal and dynamic. This is the foundation that parents can build on. So it is vitally important that parents and children pray together and then monitor how God responds to their prayers.

"Father, help us know the surpassing greatness of Your power for us who believe, which You worked in Christ and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of the One who fills all things in every way." From Ephesians 1.