

April 12, 2015 – 2nd Sunday of Easter
Doubting vs Passing on the Faith

Why Doubt? He Lives!

This old, old man is going back in time to 1955.

It was on the south side of Chicago.

The general work week had finally dropped from 44 hours per week to 40 hours a week due to all the efficiencies in the workplace.

Where I lived I could walk to three Catholic churches ... one Irish, one Lithuanian and one German.

Of course, by that time in history people had stopped speaking their native language since they wanted to "fit in".

Each of the parishes had a Catholic grade school.

The nuns were the educated people, the ones who taught us kids and who passed on the faith to us, explained it to us and demonstrated how to live the faith.

There was little doubting because the family, culture and the church were on the same page.

The Mass was in Latin, which we kids could not understand, so we said the rosary or read a book about the Mass or just knelt there.

That was then ... but the Christian message was still clear:

- We were all made in the image and likeness of God
- God sent his only Son to show us his love, to save us, and to teach us how to live our lives.
- Christ continues to be present to us in his people and, most especially, in the Eucharist.

Jump ahead 30 years to 1985.

Now the family, my wife and four kids, are here in Detroit.

That was the beginning of the digital age ... personal computers were starting to find their way into homes.

Now we drive a few miles to come here to church.

We have formed many great friendships with other families here at church.

Vatican II has given us a Mass in our own language and led us to "active and conscious" participation in that Mass ... praying as a group, singing together, maybe even clapping our hands with the music, and generally holding hands for the Our Father.

The family home has been called the "domestic church" and families are expected to nurture the faith of the young children.

Pat (my wife) and I decided to send the kids to Catholic high schools since the family has less influence on the children as they get older and we hoped the Catholic high schools would provide the best faith environment.

Something started to happen.

Doubts about the Lord, about God, about faith started creeping in.

It was becoming fashionable to quote Nietzsche: "God is dead."

That was then ... but the Christian message was the same & still clear:

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- God sent his only Son to show us his love, to save us, and to teach us how to live our lives.
- Christ continues to be present to us in his people and, most especially, in the Eucharist.

Fast forward 30 more years to today.

This weekend we are baptizing 11 children into our faith.

Yes, 11 children!

What is today's environment for raising those 11 children in the faith?

Well, it's digital everywhere!

Toddlers are already playing with digital devices.

The youth are embedded into their digital devices.

And yes, we oldsters, have smart phones, tablets, laptops, Facebook, e-mail, the internet ... yes, some of us are hooked on digital.

We have a new, gentle, kindly, loving pope, Pope Francis.

In one of his homilies he mentioned the problem we are having, the problem of finding time for our God ... and even making an "idol" of our digital devices, our long work weeks. [Rome, April 14, 2013]

Our outside society is not helping either.

Atheism, that is, "there is no God", is starting to become fashionable.

Some really brilliant people are atheists and are mocking people of faith for being so naïve. Do we want to "fit in" to that culture?

How do we pass on the precious gift of our faith to these 11 children being baptized this weekend?

That's not an easy question!

What is today's Christian message?

The Christian message is the same & still clear:

- We were all made in the image and likeness of God
- God sent his only Son to show us his love, to save us, and to teach us how to live our lives.
- Christ continues to be present to us in his people and, most especially, in the Eucharist.

One more leap of 30 years to 2045.

Well, now I am stumped!

What will it be like then?

How many of us will still be alive?

Where will God be in our lives?

What I do know is the Christian message will be the same and still clear.

- We were all made in the image and likeness of God
- God sent his only Son to show us his love, to save us, and to teach us how to live our lives.
- Christ continues to be present to us in his people and, most especially, in the Eucharist.

I am a very positive person so I am not worried about the future but I do have some old-man advice for the families of the children being baptized this weekend. My list:

1. Whether eating by yourself or with the family, say a prayer of thanksgiving to God every time you sit down to eat.
2. Chisel out some time, because it does not just appear by itself, to say good morning to God and good night to God. Expanding upon that, having a little chat with the Lord would be a great idea. Oh, yes, teach the children the same pattern.
3. Come here every weekend. I am not saying "try to come here". Make it a primary commitment. Find a way to do it.
4. Make some social friends here at church. My very best friends are ones that I've met here over the 40 years here. Maybe you can go camping together, have a barbeque together, play games, ... as families together. How about joining the "Young Adult Married Couples" (Young Marrieds)?
5. Comment to your children about the ethics and morality of items that are in the news. When the kids are old enough, make the connection to the 10 commandments.
6. Have some visible connections with the Lord in your household. Certainly a crucifix is a great choice.

7. Continue to challenge your faith, to grow in your faith by attending *Generations of Faith* with the whole family, and by sending the kids to *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*, *Journey with Jesus*, and *Sacramental Preparation*. Need to know more about those? See www.corpuschristi-detroit.org.

There, from an old man to all families.

Blessings on your families!

May any doubts you and your children have be overcome with the knowledge and the love of the Lord.

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