



Roots & Wings

September 2009

Volume 9

Issue 1

A publication of the Infant Jesus of Prague Catholic Life Committee



Welcome Back!

The Catholic Life Committee is pleased to present the ninth year of *Our Catholic Culture in Christ*. We are a committee of parents, teachers, administrators, IJP staff and other members of the IJP family under the umbrella of the IJP Education Committee which is itself under the umbrella of the IJP School Board.

Each year our committee focuses on one of the following: Our Virtues, the Beatitudes, the Ten Commandments and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. This year, we will begin the cycle again with a focus on the following Virtues: **Faith, Hope, Love, Prudence, Justice, Temperance, Courage and Kindness.**

Each month, we will focus attention and activity on a featured virtue, learning its meaning and exploring ways to bring it more fully into our lives.

In raising our children, we strive to teach them that our faith in God should directly influence our behavior. To develop a strong character, a child must have an active and well-formed conscience that becomes a constant moral guide. For thousands of years, philosophers have argued in defense of a virtuous life based on what is truly good for one's soul and for the community at-large.

In today's discussion of character, the term "virtue" carries a narrow meaning, usually wrapped in various types of self-denial. What then, is virtue? In the Catholic tradition, the Virtues are habits of behavior that define us as persons and help us to achieve our full potential. Virtues are skills that are learned by doing and must be reinforced daily.

To choose and seek virtue is a lifelong quest in transforming ourselves: We are works-in-progress. The Virtues focus not on *duty* but on *being* as the central moral concept. That is, what one does depends on the type of person one is: Being virtuous should not be seen as a negative: It is incentive to be like Christ.

The Catholic Church adopted the Cardinal Virtues – prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice – as a means of living a good life on earth leading to eternal life in heaven. These Virtues, by themselves, are insufficient, however, because for eternal life, we need to know Christ. The Church, therefore, incorporated three Theological Virtues – faith, hope and love – that come from God's grace.

Our Prayer for the Year

An Offering to the Holy Child

O Dear sweet Infant Jesus,
I offer You my will that You strengthen it,
my mind that You inspire it,
my memory that You fill it,
my wishes and desires that You cleanse them.

I sacrifice to You my intentions that You guide them,

all my inner and outer activities that You make them sacred.

All I am and all I have is Yours.

Your love for me is my hope and trust.

Hear me and grant that I may never leave you.

Amen.



Without
Faith it's
Impossible!



Kingsmen Rock - Virtues To Live By

Kingsmen **ROCK** is back and this year the IJP Discipline Committee has partnered with the Catholic Life Committee to emphasize that in raising our children as Catholics, we strive to teach them that our faith in God should directly influence our behavior. To develop a strong character, a child must have an active and well-formed conscience that becomes a constant moral guide. The Kingsmen **ROCK** program emphasizes the following:

- Optimized academic instruction
- Teaching expected behaviors
- Modeling and practicing expected behaviors
- Pre-correcting to ensure expected behaviors are displayed
- A focus on the Catholic Virtues throughout the 2009-2010 school year

(The **ROCK** Guidelines can be found on the IJP School Website)

As we enter the end of September and move into October, our children will be asked to focus on the virtue of Faith. Look for more in next month's issue of *Roots and Wings*.

In The Words of Mother Theresa...

Prompt, simple, blind, cheerful obedience to God is the proof of faith.



If you have faith

as small as a mustard seed,

you can say to this mountain,

"Move from here to there"

and it will move.

Matthew 17:20

What does it mean to live a virtuous life?

Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'" Luke 13: 6-9

Sometimes we don't realize how important we are in the Kingdom of God. The fruits that we have to offer to Our Lord are necessary and important in order to make God's work multiply. We all have different gifts and God asks of us different amounts and types of fruit. The fruit that Christ talks about doesn't refer only to the number of prayers that I say or the number of people that I convert with my example, but he refers above all to our growth in virtues like: love, patience, kindness, peace, etc. Am I growing in these virtues? Am I striving to become more like Christ everyday in these virtues?

From Catholic.Net, accessed 9/1/05,

Share Your Abundance!

Don't we all get lots of religious materials in the mail - rosaries, medallions, keychains, etc.? We just cannot use them all ourselves but it seems wasteful to throw them away! If you have extra items, please feel free to send them to school to the attention of Mrs. Swanson or Mrs. Hughes and they will be sure to use them in their teaching or pass them on.



Faith *“We believe because we love.”*

John Henry Newman

By Laurie Liesen

The virtue of faith involves the acceptance of God and Jesus without asking for evidence or proof. In our cynical culture that demands empirical evidence, this is definitely a difficult virtue to live by. We are asked to believe in God and Jesus Christ, whom we cannot see and have never met. Indeed, our intellectual abilities are not the source of our faith in God and His goodness; no one believes in God except from his/her own free will. When God speaks to us through divine revelation, he is not causing us to know objective facts about Himself, but He is sharing His being with us.

The essential element of our faith is God’s own revelation of Himself. His communication with us is the gift of faith that enables us to know God insofar as His reality is accessible to us. It is by listening to God and believing in Him that we can truly say we “know” God. When we love God, we want to know Him better by living our lives in such a way that we will join Him in eternal life.

As a virtue, faith is the practice of being consistently open to God and His message to love Him and others. By accepting God’s message that is imparted to us, as believers we are participating in God’s divine plan. Our lives are a reflection of our faith in God. Faith must be lived everyday in how we deal with others, how we accept the gifts and burdens we have, and how we make choices in our lives.

What is faith?

By Deacon George W. Brooks, Oct. 2005

What is faith? Isn’t it just believing in God? Maybe it means believing in God and also believing that Jesus was born, died on the Cross and rose from the dead? Maybe it’s also believing in everything Jesus taught us while He was on earth.

Actually, it is all of the above—and more. First of all, faith is a gift. A gift is something freely given. “Faith” is freely given to us by God. When we are given a gift—especially a valuable gift—what do we do with it? Think of something very special you got for a Christmas present or birthday present. What did you do with this special present? Did you keep it in the wrapping and just think about it. Let’s say it was a brand new, deluxe bike. What would you do with it? Would you just put it in the garage and think about it once and awhile? If you REALLY liked and appreciated the bike, you would ride it as much as possible.

Faith means that you will not be embarrassed or afraid to “admit” that you believe in God or that you believe in Jesus Christ and His teachings. It may seem easy to go to Mass and to say you believe in God and accept Jesus Christ. There may even be times when your friends want you to “skip Mass” or make fun of you for going to Church. There may be times when your “friends” make fun of someone or they are saying bad things about a group of people. Having faith means that you speak up, that you don’t go along with the “crowd”. That is the risk of the virtue of faith; that is the challenge of living your faith.

Just like any virtue, you need to use the gift of faith on a regular, daily basis. Virtues deepen as we use them. Virtues become part of us as we make them part of our daily life.



Simon Birch (1998)

As reviewed by James Lamb, former IJP student

Stars Ashley Judd and Jim Carrey help to tell the story of a small boy named Simon Birch. When he is born, Simon is the smallest delivery ever in the hospital. His heart is bigger than his body, and the doctor thinks that he will not live more than a few hours. However, Simon does make it through, and lives all the way to the age of twelve. This movie is a story of how he and his friend Joe walk on their own spiritual paths and learn about life and God. In the end, it turns out that Simon’s size allows him to be an instrument of God’s will.

The movie’s message of faith, which rings true in many of our lives, is that no matter your size or appearance, you can still do great things and be accepted into God’s family.

The movie’s PG rating is very generous, and parents with children under the age of 12 should not allow them to watch it alone. The swearing is a little over the top; there is a fatal accident scene; and the movie does include a small amount of sexual language.

The movie portrays many truths about faith and the Church. However, it is a little more edgy and dramatic than you would expect in a movie about faith. I would recommend this movie to anyone wanting to enhance their knowledge of God and have fun doing it.

BOOKS ON FAITH

Compiled by Pam Bartusiewicz; annotations and reading levels from SWAN.

Did you know that many of the books and other materials highlighted in *Roots and Wings* are available in the IJP School Library? These are available to the entire IJP community. Just look for the “Our Catholic Culture” sticker on the books and see our IJP librarian.

— Books available in the IJP Library

Ages 4-8:

Krause, Ruth; [The Carrot Seed](#). A warm story about a boy’s faith and conviction

Bennett, William; [The Children’s Treasury of Virtues](#). For heroes who exhibit faith, see “A Prayer at Valley Forge” and “David and Goliath”

[Saints For Young Readers](#). Two volumes

Carlstrom, Nancy White; [Does God Know How to Tie Shoes?](#) As a young girl walks with her parents through the countryside, her questions elicit responses that help her to know God better.

Gold, August; [Does God Hear My Prayer?](#) Presents a nondenominational guide to prayer for young children, in simple text with illustrations, including information on building a personal relationship with God.

Kroll, Virginia L; [I Wanted to Know All About God](#). Presents questions children ask about God, such as, where does God go at night and what colors does he like?

Nobisso, Josephine; [The Weight of a Mass: A Tale of Faith](#). On the day of a royal wedding in a kingdom where everyone has grown careless in the practice of his or her Catholic faith, a poor widow helps reveal the true value of the Mass.

Kushner, Lawrence; [Because Nothing Looks Like God](#). Uses real-life examples of happiness and sadness to teach children about God.

Marxhausen, Joanne; [3 in 1 \(A Picture of God\)](#). Compares the three parts of an apple to the three-in-one concept of God.



Wood, Douglas; [Old Turtle](#). At a time when all the living things of the world could communicate, an argument broke out over who and what God is. Old Turtle, in her wisdom, settles the argument in this parable which promotes our relationship with the earth and all things that inhabit it.


Ages 8 and older:

Botke, Allison; [Friend or Freak : You Decide What Happens](#). The Christian reader finds different outcomes based on choices relating to friends, accompanied by suggested learning activities.

Holland, Isabelle; [Abbie's God Book](#). A twelve-year-old girl expresses her thoughts about God as she interacts with her family and schoolmates.

Bernall, Misty; [She Said Yes: The Unlikely Martyrdom of Cassie Bernall](#). Portrays the story of a girl who was killed in the Columbine High School massacre after affirming her belief In God.

Consider the virtue of faith when you watch these movies with your family: [Racing Stripes](#), [Cheaper By the Dozen](#), [October Sky](#), and [Simon Birch](#).

<p style="text-align: center; color: purple;">Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith...</p>  <p style="text-align: left; font-size: small;">Hebrews 10:22</p>	<p>Act of Faith</p> <p>O my God, I believe that you are one God in three Divine Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.</p> <p>I believe that Your Divine Son became Man and died for our sins, and that He will come again to judge the living and the dead.</p> <p>I believe these and all the truths that the Catholic Church teaches, because You have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.</p> <p>Amen.</p>
---	--

“There are two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One is roots, the other wings.”

Hodding Carter II

Copyright © 2009 Infant Jesus of Prague Catholic Life Committee, for all content and Catholic Life Committee logo. All rights reserved. No rights are claimed in works specifically attributed to others throughout this publication.

Any questions or comments about this publication or the material covered within, please contact Natalie Lamb of The Catholic Life Committee. Phone 708-748-3909 or seslam@ameritech.net.