



Passing on a living faith

The Year of Faith in our families.

Notes from the Key Parent Function Presentation 23 August 2013

1. Take a step back.

- Yearn for holiness and pass this on to your children.
- 'The universal call to holiness' is the great message of Vatican II.
- How much more true is this for your family:
'Catholic schools have grown more complex, but at their heart lies a great and simple truth. They are above all to be schools of holiness. They exist primarily to give saints to the world.'
Blessed John Paul II *Millennial message to Australian Catholic School Students*. (17.3.2000)

2. No walk in the park! You are facing lots of competition.

- Materialism. Family breakdown. Peer example. Sex without love and commitment. Substance abuse. Disengagement with education. Violence. Depression. The breakdown of faith in the family: 'the most alarming reality we face.'

3. There are two aspects to the task of passing on a living faith: you are teaching doctrine + a way of living.

- Children need the testimony of their parents' lives motivated by love of God.
- This unity of life brings great peace of heart.
'One cannot separate the seed of doctrine from the seed of piety.'
St Josemaria *The Forge*

4. Start early

'...what good effects come from this natural and supernatural introduction to the life of piety given in the warmth of the home. Children learn to place God first and foremost in their affections. They learn to see God as their Father and Mary as their Mother and they learn to pray following their parents' example.' St Josemaria

5. Relationship with each child.

'Help them to be loyal, sincere, never afraid to tell you things. To do so, be loyal to them, treating them as adults, adapting yourself to their needs and the circumstances of age and character.' St Josemaria
'Be their friend. Be good and noble towards them; be sincere and straightforward.' St Josemaria

- Open, trusting communication. Friendship. Time. Acceptance of each child. Encouragement to grow in strengths of character. Look forward not back: "Sit on the same side of the table."

6. The living witness of parents

- Parental leadership of the 'domestic church' in your home.
 - Prayers at home: morning and evening prayers, grace at meals, family Rosary.
 - Discussion about the readings at Mass on Sunday. A short reading from the gospel each evening.

- Avoidance of occasions of sin in holiday venues, television, internet.
- Defend Christian values in society.
- Concern for spiritual welfare of friends and relatives.

In this way parents 'Penetrate to the innermost depths of their children's hearts and leave an imprint that future events will not be able to wipe out.' Blessed John Paul II *Familiaris Consortio* (1981)

7. Your example

- Your habits of daily prayer.
 - Your joy after going to confession.
 - Your eagerness to receive the Eucharist.
 - Your self sacrifice for family.
 - Your focus on others.
 - Your patience and peace of heart.
- "My father never had to be tough on me, he was so tough on himself."
Blessed John Paul II

8. The big messages to young people.

- **Talk about holiness**
- **The necessity of prayer and commitment to daily prayer**
 - 'A saint without prayer? I don't believe in such sanctity.' St Josemaria
 - 'Holiness calls for a Christian life distinguished above all in the art of prayer.' Blessed John Paul II
 - 'It is prayer that the Holy Spirit changes our lives.'
 - 'Without prayer that fills our lives we would be Christians at risk.' Blessed John Paul II *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (1999)
- **We draw our strength from the sacraments**
 - 'We draw our strength from the Eucharist.' Blessed John Paul II.
 - 'We know that the Sacrament of Penance is greatly needed in the Church today and that its use must be revived. We know too that this revival depends above all, after God's grace, on the zeal and fidelity of the Bishops of the Church.' Blessed John Paul to Australian Bishops (26.11.86)
- **The Church is a great gift.**
 - It is our guide to truth and source of holiness in the sacraments.
- **Foster good reading.**
- **Show patience in difficulties.**
 - Difficulties are meant to make us pray.**
 - 'Suffering exists to release love into the world'. Blessed John Paul II
- **Prepare children for the future**
 - Talk to each about discovering the path God has ready for them in life
 - Teach them to pray each day to discover God's plan for them.
 - Pray for the vocations of your children.
 - 'Make sure that you are open to vocations in your family. Pray that, as a sign of his special love, God may deign to call one or more members of your family to serve him. Live your faith with a joy and fervour that will encourage vocations.'
 - Blessed John Paul II (1981)
- **Teach your children to strive to do as much good in this world as they can.**
 - 'Shine on the world like bright stars!'
 - 'Yours are the only hands with which he can do his work.' St Teresa of Avila
- **Teach authentic friendship**
- **The prayer of parents.**
 - 'Let them see you pray. That's what I saw my parents do, and it's engraved in my heart. So when your children reach my age, they will fondly remember their mother and father, who forced them only by their example and smile, giving them doctrine when needed, without pestering them.' **St Josemaria**

9. The Year of Faith is a knocking at the door of your soul.