

“Faith is a divinely infused virtue by which man believes, on God’s authority, what God has revealed and teaches through his holy church.”

These are the words of Saint Alphonsus Liguori, one of the true great spiritual teachers of the church. An infused virtue is one that is practiced over a life time. We must remember that faith is not just a word but an action; it is to be a part of our being and makeup. Learning to be a person of faith is the best way I know how to offset false teaching or false prophecy. If I am a man of faith, I will know a false teacher when I hear one. And I will stay away. Some years ago, a certain fringe church said the world will come to an end in 1914. Their watchtower was considered to be their prophet. It was the watchtower that declared this prophecy. It did not happen; the world did not come to an end. A true prophet speaks for God and is always correct. The tower therefor, is a false prophet.

Nathaniel Hawthorn the American novelist referred to Christian Faith as a “Grand Cathedral, with divinely pictured windows. Standing outside you cannot see the glory inside, but standing

inside every ray of light reveals a harmony of unspeakable splendors.”

This is divinely infused faith. It lives in the human soul. Apart from the church and its teaching one will never see the glory of God.

Many people start life by attending church, but soon fall away. Receiving little or no guidance in the home. They find that the Christian Faith serves no purpose in their life and live a so-called free lifestyle doing what ever they wish with out consequence. Of course

there are always consequences. That there are none is just another lie. Today’s education system encourages children to be independent, to be their own person. This is very much like the sin of Eden: “Who said you can’t do that? said Satan in disguise. You can do whatever you want. There is no one to answer to.” Certainly, a person can be independent, but not apart from God. Apart from God there is slavery – to sin. These are the words of false teachers who appear attractive but are dangerous liars who poison and destroy character rather than build it into wholesome goodness. And that is precisely the work of Satan. Satan may not be in vogue

today but he is none the less real. His greatest achievement thus far is to persuade people he doesn't exist.

One who lacks faith will never distinguish a person by the fruit he bears. There is true fruit that one can bite into and savor and plastic fruit people dress their tables with. Looks exactly like real fruit but it isn't. A child might see the false fruit and bite into it and unless you help that child eat a real apple, he will never know the difference.

Aristotle a philosopher who lived three hundred years before Christ and was taught by Plato said "something is good only if it fulfills its purpose. A cup is only good if it has a bottom. Otherwise it is not a cup. The purpose of a false prophet is never good. His means to an end is to confuse and conquer.

The famous author Robert Louis Stevenson was a man of deep and profound faith. Yet as a young person he rebelled against his upbringing. His parents were strict Scottish Presbyterians. He called his childhood "the deadliest gag and wet blanket that can be laid upon a man." As he matured, he began to doubt his doubts. He came to see that the world could not provide any satisfying answers

to the deeper questions in life. Later he would write; "There is a God, a God who is real for those who care to look for him." Soon he would describe his Christian walk as "Cast Iron faith."

How then do we explain the tragic circumstances young people find themselves in today? Why do they leave the church? Sex? Drugs? Peer pressure?

The answer is simple and timeless. There is only one course of action, when as adults we see a young person or a not-so-young person lose their way. That course of action involves prayer and example. No child or adult will develop true faith if he was never brought to church by his parents. He will lose himself in a world filled with all manner of bad examples. Like Stevenson, young people will see others who practice faith and their conduct as that rock to turn to when the world fails to provide the answers they are seeking. What I am getting at is at times the world can be a false prophet teaching that the mmmmm church is irrelevant, truth is what you wish it to be, there are no absolutes, if you no longer wish to be called Bill, call yourself Mary, on and on.

Saint Paul makes clear this perfect truth in 1 Corinthians, “faith, hope and love are at the heart of the Christian life, helping us realize that we have been delivered from the sin of Adam, who fell into the trap of a false prophet and lived to regret it, delivered from that sin by Christs death and Resurrection.” Hope grows as we learn all that God has in mind for us; it gives us the promise of a bright future. And God’s love fills our lives and gives us the ability to reach out to others.

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