Faith Reflections

Nathan’s Grandma

The grandmother was settling her three-year old grandson down for his afternoon nap when he looked at her and asked, “Grandma, what is prayer?” “Nathan, would you like to pray?” “Yes,” he said. So Grandma prayed with him a prayer that she had been taught as a child by her mother or grandmother.

The grandmother wondered if Nathan’s question was provoked by a song she had sung with Nathan the week before… “It’s me, it’s me, it’s me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer.” She loved how Nathan made the words his own in one verse. Being an only child he changed the verse “Not my brother or my sister but it’s me, O Lord” into “Not my father or my mother” and “not my grandma or my grandpa but it’s me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer.” And now he wanted to go deeper into this topic with his grandma. What is prayer?

The wonderful thing is that Nathan’s grandma is also going deeper into the practice of prayer—alone with God as well as in a group at her church. As she prays, experiencing the mystery of God’s presence within her and around her, she is learning that she is also a channel for God’s love to touch the lives of other people, including little Nathan. In her practice of prayer, it is becoming more comfortable for her to talk about spirituality.

Over and over again, the adults who tell me about their journey of faith speak about the people who have been willing to share their life experiences with God. Over and over again, these key people are grandparents! Grandparents who are able to hear and respond to the questions children ask, not feeling they have to have all the answers but sharing what they know at the level their grandchildren can understand. Grandparents who teach a child how to pay attention to their own spirits through prayer and song and bring them to worship and make them feel at home in a place of worship. Grandparents who spend time in conversation, in exploring the world God has made, in hearing endless questions, in sharing stories from the bible, and in just hanging out. What a gift! And the grandparents I know tell me that
having a grandchild who wants to spend time talking, singing and hanging out is a gift for them too!

In the book of 2 Timothy, Paul writes to Timothy who is like a son to him. Paul gives thanks for his life and his honest faith—“and what a rich faith it is, handed down from your grandmother Lois to your mother Eunice, and now to you!” Faith is a precious gift. If you are a grandparent, you may be reflecting on the legacy of your life. Is part of that legacy sharing the gift of your faith with your grandchildren? It can start with something as simple as a song that invites a question that leads to a prayer. And who knows where it will lead you next!

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(Published in the “Faith Matters” column, Flamborough Review)