Faith Reflections

Through the Eyes of a Child

I seem to be at that stage of life where a lot of my friends are becoming grandparents. It is fun to watch their anticipation, their adjustments in self-perception (I don’t feel anything like my grandparents – who were old!), their joy. The birth of a child can be such a blessing for parents and grandparents as well as for the wider community.

How can we all bless the little ones in our lives and help them develop spiritually? And what can little ones teach us in turn? Babies remind us of something we too often forget: that our life is dependent on others and on God. In a world where we are told to make it on our own, it is a spiritual gift to recognize our interdependence. It is the foundation for a sense of connection that gives deep meaning to life. When a baby cries and someone responds, she begins to experience the world as a trustworthy place. When his basic needs for food, comfort, sleep and interaction are met, a baby is helped to trust, which is the foundation of faith.

God is one we can turn to, one who knows and understands us, even better than we do ourselves. God shelters us, protects us, feeds us, cares for us, loves us as the unique person each of us is. The child who learns to trust parents and caregivers will later be willing to trust teachers and other adults and will have the capacity to trust God.

Babies and toddlers learn about the world through their senses. Little ones can remind us that being able to safely explore all that life offers is something special.

“Taste and see that the Lord is good”, says the psalmist. Embrace life with the abandon of a two-year-old child and see what God can show you!

Likewise, these little ones are observing you all the time. They will watch you and imitate you and, in this way, make your practices and attitudes their own.
I love watching the preschoolers at worship because, like the choir they see, they open hymn books and raise their voices in praise, even though they can’t yet read. It doesn’t matter because they know they are a part of something important that’s happening.

At home, meal and bedtime prayers and simple rituals that are predictable teach a young child that they can trust this world.

As they start to explore the world around them, studying ants and checking out everything that creeps and crawls, teach them how to say “thank you” to God for the wonders of our world.

Let’s support one another in nurturing the little ones in our midst! We will be blessed as we do.

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