



Diocese of Fargo
Our Stories of Faith

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Deacon Carl Orthman's Story

When I think of faith (belief in God), as a shared "deposit" from which we all can draw, I am reminded of my two saintly grandmothers and of all their efforts to pass on that faith to their children and their neighbors. They each birthed six children and were the faith leaders in their homes, as was not unusual in their day, my grandfathers being somewhat passive in their beliefs. Fortunately for me, both of my parents "caught" the faith that was passed on to them, so I grew up never knowing a time when I did not believe in the Father, his Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Looking back over nearly seventy years, I can see clearly what a difference faith makes over a lifetime. It isn't so much that it changes what we experience, as that it carries us through those experiences, without being torn apart by all of those devastating trials that life can bring to our doorstep. My greatest joy within that faith life was receiving the grace to be received into that traditional, apostolic faith in my forties which we all simply call the "Church." It was



like moving up from a Ford to a Lexus. The Ford got me where I wanted to go, but the Lexus has all of the bells and whistles that had been missing. I immediately inherited an additional 2,000 years of Christian history that had been missing before along with all the saints and their stories of faith, not to mention all of the

reasoning behind the doctrines that we all accept, simply because that is what our family has always believed.

But most of all, I was able to come to that table upon which my Lord shares with me his very Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. He shares much more than that, of course, but how to explain what goes on within a soul during a typical day: thoughts, understandings, leanings, insights, connections made, etc., which typically can occur within the faith life of a practicing Catholic?

This faith, this treasure that lives within me, I now carry to my RCIA classes, into the prison on Monday evenings, into Cursillo meetings on Tuesdays, and of course, everywhere

that I go, praying to God Almighty that it will "rub off" on those with whom I share my life and experiences. Preaching from the pulpit, I still remember the words of someone who once gave me advice on preaching in which they said, "They will probably not remember what you say, but what they will never forget is the faith with which you say it! I have come to believe that those who have gone on before me into their reward have had an influence upon me and my life

experiences, as they from within their "faith" reach out in loving concern to me and those for whom I have concerns.

May this "faith" permeate all things one day, and unite into one all of us, as we come before the One who first revealed Himself to those first persons who have influenced all of us, through their experiences with the Living One Who Saves.

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