

Faith Alive!

RESOURCES FOR FAITH IN THE WORLD

by William Yoho

In 1 Corinthians, 13:11, Peter writes: "When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things." We are now at a point where we are asking you to take your faith out into the world and apply it in the everyday, coming back to the church to be renewed and refreshed in that faith. But before you go out there, you need to ask yourself: Do I have the knowledge of my faith and of how to pray that I need out there in the world?

Too many of us will find that the faith that we have inside us is not necessarily the Catholicism of the third millennium. It may not even be the faith of the post Vatican II church.

I heard a sermon recently in which we were told of a four step plan for implementing our faith. The four steps are "Vision - Attitude - Actions - Skills." They describe how to accomplish a goal. First, we need to establish the goal - to set the vision. Then, we need to develop the attitude that will cause us to accept the vision as being possible. With the attitude established, we need to determine what actions are necessary and what skills need to be acquired. We do this much in our own jobs. We try to stay at the forefront of what we do. In my field of law, I spend several hours a week making sure that I know what the law is. But I realized that I was not keeping my knowledge of my faith up to date. My purpose today is to share some resources for keeping your faith knowledge up to date.

I divide the spiritual resources into three groups: learning, reflecting and experiencing.

The items in the first or "learning" group are books and resources to give you a deeper understanding of the Church and its teachings. The primary book is the Word itself - the Bible. Everyone should have at least one copy of the Bible that looks well used. Personally, I like to read from different Bibles, and so I have a New American Bible and a Jerusalem Bible, as well as two different German Bibles. Of these, the first is the traditional Luther translation and the second is a recent ecumenical translation. An important factor of Catholicism, however, is the rich teaching tradition of the Church. Complementing those, I have a copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, a copy of the documents of Vatican Council II, and a wonderful text by Fr. Richard McBrien, Catholicism. That last work will tell you about the rich teaching tradition which I just mentioned. I also include in this category our own diocesan publication, the Universe Bulletin. Another very interesting read is a recent book by Fr. Andrew Greeley entitled "The Catholic Imagination."

The "reflection" works tend to be daily prayer sources. There are a number of daily prayer sources, including Christian Prayer, which is a "lay" version of the Order of the

Hours, *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis, and a relatively new monthly prayer magazine called *Magnificat* (www.magnificat.net). Other sources are "Bible reflection" works, such as *The Word Among Us* (www.wau.org), *Living Faith* (www.livingfaith.com), *God's Word Today*, and *Our Daily Bread*, which is a Protestant bible study guide. The works of Thomas Merton, Fr. Henri Nouwen and many others certainly also fit into this group.

The "experiencing" works are really in two subgroups. The first of these is the weekly or monthly Catholic periodical, such as the Jesuit magazine *America*, the *St. Anthony Messenger* (www.americancatholic.org), and, again, the *Universe Bulletin*. The second group of resources is a group of Catholic websites. A prime site among these is *Sacred Space*, a prayer and reflection site of the Irish Jesuits (www.jesuit.ie/prayer/). At the end of the prayer experience there are a number of additional prayer/reflection sites listed. Another excellent location is the *Eternal Word Television Network* site (www.ewtn.com).

I find that my prayer style and reading interests will vary day by day, so I like to have a number of resources to draw upon. If you find one specific source to particularly suit you, that works too. The important thing is to have a source that you can go to daily and to use it.

From "Tab 6: Talk Outlines—Teaching & Personal Witness" in *Faith Alive! the Retreat Manual*, pp. 37-38, downloaded September 2, 2010 from <http://www.livingfaithatwork.org>