

Faith at Work at Work

In seeking to put my faith into action in my daily life, I have tended to focus on certain aspects of our Church's creed statements: (a) there is an all-powerful God who created the universe and all that exists including me, (b) God loves all his creation globally and each of us individually, (c) God desires we humans freely to choose to love him (d) God incarnated himself into this world as Jesus Christ, and (e) living as a human being Jesus taught us how to love God. We can be friends of God.

God created each and every human being even, or especially, the least among us. Whomever I may be with, I am in a community of God's creations; we are family. Within this community, He offered me and many others the gift of faith, and in accepting this gift we accept a commitment to build up his community. We, a community of believers, cooperate in spreading the message of His love and an expectation of eternal life. We act to give the experience of being loved to others and through that experience give a new and deeper meaning to life, theirs and ours. As family the interactions between us should be characterized by love, respect, justice, and peace.

I only control one part of the interaction, my attitude and my actions. However imperfectly I may do it, I seek to react to the undeserved love I have received from God and to the teachings He gave us when He lived among us. Out of the habitual acceptance and expectation of eternal life with God (Hope), I strive to act in a way that gives expression to God's love for me and all His creation (Love) independent of the attitudes and actions of those I am with.

To live my faith at work is complex in that there are multiple needs and hence ways to express God's love in our human interactions. Foundational to meeting those complexities of life are Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance. In the interplay between these virtues and Faith, Hope, and Charity, many, many values come to the fore. Yet all are derived from the belief in one, true, loving God creator of all (Faith). It may be forgiveness that is called for, or generosity, gratitude, tolerance, or again simply joy in being loved and in loving. Nearly always some aspect of humility and community building is needed.

The frequent recollection is "God loves me; God wants me to love." The frequent questions are, "How can I express my faith in God's love today, in this moment, in this place, in these circumstances?" This has been most difficult for me when I feel that someone has treated me wrongly or unfairly. The old formula was to lash out publically and/or privately. The better formula became to figure out what might have made their actions seem reasonable to them. I want to understand why they chose their actions. I also had to look at myself and figure out why I was upset. If those answers did not satisfy me, I saw the next step as to approach the other person with an attitude of exploration or learning, I sought to learn and understand what lay behind their action so well that I could state their case clearly and acceptably back to them. Once I could do that, I would ask them to let me explain my concerns/problem so they would understand my thoughts and feelings. The touchstone, so to speak, was to figure out what situation or action by me was best for our community (workplace).

In all situations, I believe taking the path toward improving the common good, to growing the community beginning with the least and with consideration for all, would make my faith a living faith at work.

FAITH — A Faith Based Value at Work

1. What does applying the faith-based value of chastity in your workplace mean to you? What do you think it would mean to those with whom you work? How does its meaning change for your different workplaces, for example, home or where you volunteer?
2. Why is it important to gain an understanding of faith in the workplace and how to apply that understanding?
3. How do/could you apply the concept of faith in your workplace(s)?
4. What would happen in your workplace if you took and actively applied the values of your faith in your workplace(s)? How would the workplace sound different? Look different? Feel different?
5. What first step are you willing to take this week?