

CUNY Ethics and Morality Essay Contest

Fall 2015 Essay Topic: Faith

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My faith is not passed on to me by my late mom by genes or vertical transmission but by her solid example or by modeling behavior. What does the world want to have? Power, popularity and money. If one has any one of these three it is a blessing but Jesus teaches if one is poor in material things but his spirit is rich of the virtues which are the fruits of the mustard seed of faith planted in one's heart, that makes the impossible possible. In Hebrew 11:6 says that without faith, it is impossible to please God. For whoever approaches God must believe that He exists, and that He rewards those who seek Him. People who have faith are in constant prayer and communication with Him and always have hope for the common good of all not only of him. Having faith in Him will always bring a person of the richness of knowledge and wisdom of the One who created him, hence, daily reading God's word in the Bible is also a manifestation of that faith. And the last and most important but most difficult part is how to live that faith and produce good fruits in other people's lives.

In Matthew 19:16, there is a man who went up to Jesus and asked Him, "Good Master, what should I do to have eternal life? And Jesus asked him why do you call me "good", no one is good but God!" This implies that the only source of goodness is God. Chappell defines virtue as good thing about a person or a disposition of character which humans need to have flourishing human life. Flourishing means growth in all aspects. Hence, anything that we see growing is good. Faith is a virtue because it is needed in flourishing human life. Relating faith to my field of science-biology, it is like a catalyst. Merriam Webster defines it as chemical that enhances the chemical reactions. In our body, catalyst so our cells will be able to utilize the food that we eat, essential to the growth of the cells. How does a Christian faith as a virtue relate to ethics and morality? Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy describes morality and ethics as customs commonly shared by people in the community as standard or accepted behavior and that's why

they can be used interchangeably but Aristotle ethics focused mainly on the pursuit of “good” or the highest good in life and that’s how the Christian faith defines the distinction.

Abstract words like faith is concretized and manifested in my life who gives importance to this virtue. Hebrew 11:1 defines faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not apparent. Faith is one of the theological virtues that encompasses all other virtues like hope and charity/love. A person with full of faith will always be hopeful and loving and concerned of others’ well-being regardless of the difficult situation, trials and tribulations that a person is facing.

My late mom was my idol and I truly admired her when it came to living her faith. She was devoted Catholic but was not the traditional type who loves to be in the church and does ritualistic prayers but she reads the Bible every day and practice its principle in her life, that made her the “living Bible”. Year 1991 and 1993 were periods of difficult trials and tribulations in our family. My late dad was diagnosed with stage 3 lung cancer in 1991, the same year when I began practicing my own faith. My mom prayed fervently for his healing and piously offering a prayer that God may change his heart, his ways and his narcissistic tendencies. From the time she married my dad, she started praying for him and truly after 33 years of being married to him, her prayers were answered concomitantly. After 5 months of exposure to radiotherapy in Philippine General Hospital, the gigantic tumor occupying 2/3 of his left lung gradually decreased to a guava-sized tumor. This is the first miracle I ever witnessed in my life. The post treatment chest x-ray revealed a normal, perfect pair of lungs which the doctors found astounding and miraculous. His old narcissistic ways were also changed into a new person, a 180° turn towards God.

From that day on, I believe that prayer and strong faith in God work at all times. In 1981, my 2<sup>nd</sup> to the eldest brother was diagnosed with schizophrenia, a severe mental disorder. In 1993, however, I had another brother diagnosed with brief psychotic disorder who turned to be schizophrenia, also after recurring in 13 years and my sister was diagnosed with bipolar disorder with psychotic features. In the same year also, I failed two major courses in medical school, Internal Medicine and Surgery. My mom was afraid that I might be the 4<sup>th</sup> child to be diagnosed with psychiatric disorder. With my faith in God started to grow at that point, I prayed that He would spare me from this. With His grace, and my mom's faith, we survived those difficult trials. I finished and practiced medicine in the Philippines for 3 years before coming to the US in 2000. We are 7 siblings, me, being the youngest. Nobody in both sides of our families have psychiatric disorders even from my grandparents but genetics had no explanation for having 3 out of 7 children diagnosed with mental disorder. My mom's ways of living serves as my guide every moment of my life, wherever I am. Being the head servant of our charismatic prayer group, I live and model the kind of faith that I have in my heart, even to my peers and classmates. That faith blazes the fire of my prayer life and my Christian deeds which inspire me to do good things for others no matter who they are. My constant communication with God in prayer makes it intercessory for myself, my family, and all people that I know who need prayers, the whole world, leaders and religious leaders.

God knows I want to get back my MD in the United States but His answer seems "Wait", not NO. And I know how He is molding my character to be humble and more patient. Hence, at the moment, even the road in becoming a Physician Assistant has a block. With my present family circumstances, I need to start my health career as a nurse so I can work and help my husband financially and take care of my niece for whom I am a custodial caregiver, with

schizophrenia, too. With the faith I have, I temporarily let go of my dream to get back my MD and pursue something lower than that, although, I know my intellectual capacity can reach that career goal. As a biology and math tutor at QCC, I am helping mostly the pre nursing students to be successful in the program. I am happy for that calling at the moment and it gives me fulfillment and that is how I know my steps are directed by the Spirit of God.

According to the book of James 2: 14-17, faith without deeds is dead. Hence, my faith is alive by my action and good works. The living faith in God which is integrated part of my character and giving of myself totally to Him makes it possible for me to do good things and possessing good thoughts and desire and pray for the benefit of others. The mentally ill child under my custody amazingly looks normal and is easy to be reared because she is more obedient than before she was mentally institutionalized. The goodness in her behavior is one of the fruits of my faith and prayer work together. The Spirit of God who lives within me drives and defines the good moral and ethical character which is projected to other people. The uniqueness of Christian faith makes it possible for me to live a life of love as based on Jesus teachings as He says, "Love one another as I have loved you and that will prove that you are my disciples". Although other people do bad things to me, I do not retaliate but instead, I pray for these people. Therefore, living a Christian faith is above ethics and morality for it demands not only to good things but loving others as I love myself.

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