



Liturgy of the Word with Children - Our Future Hope

Rayda Jalandoon

As part of our living community of faith, we owe it to our children to provide every possible opportunity to worship God. As parents, it is our duty to provide them a foundation that will always remain with them throughout their entire life.

Building a deep relationship with God through the virtues of Faith, Hope and Love at an early age is a stepping stone. Yet the concept of these virtues is difficult for children to grasp as it is not tangible or concrete. Celebrating the Liturgy of the Word with children offers them an opportunity to understand, meet our Heavenly Father, develop a meaningful personal relationship and the chance to experience and participate in the Liturgy. To ensure that young children worship in a way appropriate and meaningful, a guideline was set at the Bishops Conference in 1996 in England to help share God's Word in a way that is tailored to the children's level of understanding. It is hoped in due time, they take their rightful place in the community.

The story of St. Dominic Savio exemplifies a child full of hope and love of God. Dominic was born April 2, 1842 in the village of Riva in Northern Italy. He was

second of eleven children born to Charles and Brigid Savio, who were poor hardworking pious people. As a normal child he grew up loving to play, high spirited who sometimes get into trouble with his teacher because he would often break out laughing. However, he was bright and intelligent at school, showed early leadership qualities and strong sense of duty.

As the day of his First Communion drew near he wrote down resolutions, a remarkable thought which became the basis of how he lived his life. He walked 3 miles everyday to and from school. One day an elderly man asked him "Are you not afraid to walk alone on this country road?" Dominic replied, "My guardian angel is with me and God is my Master". Another incident happened in school which showed the depth of Dominic's kindness and thoughtfulness. A classmate committed a serious offense and falsely accused Dominic. The teacher scolded him and threatened expulsion but he made no reply. Few days later the guilty classmate was discovered and the teacher asked Dominic why he did not defend himself, his reply was slow and simply, said " I remember our Lord was unjustly accused and I hoped that if I kept

silence he would be given another chance.”

Dominic was twelve years old when he met Don Bosco, a priest of the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales in Turin. He asked Don Bosco if he could take him to the Oratory as he hoped to become a priest someday. To test his learning skill, Don Bosco gave him a book to memorize a page and see him the next day. But Dominic returned few minutes later smiling and recited the assigned page word for word without any mistakes that impressed Don Bosco.



Early of October 1854 Dominic arrived at the Oratory in Turin and paid Don Bosco a visit. He noticed a sign in a frame hanging over the door with a motto which translated to “Give me soul take away the rest”. He did not understand the meaning but it became a seed that was planted in his heart. From that day onward Dominic made such evident progress in virtue. He learned that to be a saint is easy. Just do the ordinary thing in an extra ordinary way, perform all duties cheerfully as the Lord loves cheerful giver. Dominic also had a special love for the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The boys of his dormitory decided to set up a little shrine of Our Lady at their own expense. Having no

cent to help, Dominic decided to sell a book he received as a prize. The others were so impressed that they too, got books and things, had a little raffle to pay for the project.

During the next 2 years, Dominic grew in the awareness of God’s call to holiness.

He became a person of prayers sharing his knowledge and awareness of God and became a mentor of his companions. His classmates liked him and other kids respected and appreciated his leadership and when things went wrong, he was not afraid to step in and bring order to difficult situation.

Dominic was one of the great hope of St. John Bosco for the future of his Congregation. But he died at the age of 15 of tuberculosis. He was canonized in 1954.

Don Bosco’s approach to ministry is “To foster the young people to skills and talent that would help them to develop into a good Christian and upright citizens. Yes, children of today are the hope of tomorrow. They become future leaders in their own respective ways. They are by nature HOPEFUL.

Thought of the day “I cannot do big things but I want everything to be done for the Glory of God”. – St. Dominic Savio

