

Learning from Spiritual Wisdom

Advances and innovations in science, medicine and technology mean that we now know more about Earth and the world beyond it than we ever did before. This knowledge does not necessarily mean that we are wiser about living in the world than we were in the past. Care of the natural world, elimination of poverty and securing equal human rights for all are goals we still strive to achieve. We have much to learn from the spiritual wisdom of our Catholic faith. Indeed, we are constantly challenged by our faith in God to strive toward change, toward making the world a better place in which to live and grow in love and service of God and others. We fall short of mature faith if we ignore Jesus' call to bring the values he lived by to challenge those values of the world that are in conflict with or even contrary to the values of Christ.

Take a moment and reflect on these words of John F. Kennedy (1938–63), the thirty-fifth President of the United States:

It is an ironic fact that in this nuclear age, when the horizon of human knowledge and human experience has passed far beyond any that any age has ever known, that we turn back at this time to the oldest source of wisdom and strength, to the words of the prophets and the saints, who tell us that faith is more powerful than doubt, that hope is more potent than despair, and that only through the love that is sometimes called charity can we conquer those forces within ourselves and throughout all the world that threaten the very existence of mankind.

In what areas of life do you think people need to stop and reflect, and perhaps draw on the wisdom of the saints and prophets?

How or why might the example of the saints and prophets be helpful?

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Are there areas in your own life where you feel the need to seek out their wisdom for guidance and inspiration? Share your thoughts if you feel comfortable doing so.

Choose someone who is living a Christian life that inspires you. You might choose a family member, a member of your parish or school community, or a neighbour; or it might be someone you do not know personally. Ask the person if he or she would be willing to give ten or fifteen minutes of their time to talk to you about their sources of inspiration or wisdom for the way they are living. When someone agrees to meet with you, arrange a suitable quiet time and take a notebook and pen to jot down his or her responses to your questions.

You could use these questions as guidelines for your conversation:
Do you consider your faith in God to be strong?

Have there been times in your life when your faith has been challenged?

How did you get through such times and hold on to your faith?

From where do you draw wisdom and inspiration when your faith is challenged?

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Afterward, draw up a summary of the person’s answers. Analyse your summary by using these questions:

Were you surprised by anything the person shared with you? What surprised you and why?

Do you think you would find their sources of inspiration and wisdom useful in your own life? If yes, at what times or situations in your life?
