

Journey of Faith

Ministry Formation Program Diocese of Rockford

Faith Patterns

Encounter - with the risen Christ and appreciation of religious experiences.

Accompaniment - with the other pilgrims on the journey in order to recognize and respond to patterns.

Proclamation - with the good news of the gospel we grow in holiness.

Three Ways

- Purgative - This is the state of beginners. In this stage it is often difficult to overcome daily temptations, and practicing the virtues can require an inner battle because of attachment to venial sin. Though the desire for perfection and progress is there, the beginner falls frequently.
- Illuminative - This is the intermediary stage between purification and total union with God. In this stage, there is enlightenment in the ways of God and a clear understanding of God will in one's life. There are now only occasional "slips" into sin.
- Unitive - This is the final stage of Christian perfection. A soul in the unitive state has a constant awareness of God's presence and habitually conforms to God's will. In this stage, the soul loves God and others without limit.

Stages of Faith Development

Imaginative Faith - This stage is marked by imitation. It is a fantasy filled phase in which the person can be powerfully and permanently influenced by examples, moods, actions, and language of faith by a mentor or spiritual director.

Literal Faith - In this stage the person begins to take a more serious look at their self and the stories, beliefs, and observations which connect them to a particular faith community. Consequently, as they struggle with these issues their faith is appropriated with literal interpretations that become moral rules and attitudes.

Group Faith - In this stage the person's experience of the world goes beyond the immediate community. Coherence and meaning are certified by either the authority of properly designated persons or by the authority of consensus among those who count.

Personal Faith - This is the awakening stage whereby the person questions the meaning and value of the mentor, regulations, and authority. A true sense of faith maturity is developing as the person begins to take seriously the burden of responsibility for their commitments, lifestyle, beliefs, and attitudes. This stage brings and requires a new and different kind of self-awareness and responsibility for one's choices and actions.

Mystical Faith - This stage's characteristic is acceptance as the person recognizes the integrity and truth in others' positions. The maturing person becomes comfortable in their faith development and attempts to live out their commitments and beliefs in such a way as to honor that which is true in others' lives without denying the truth of their own life. This kind of faith requires personal security, which enables the acceptance of different views and challenge to one's own positions.

Sacrificial Faith - In this final stage the person exists in the world as a transforming presence. They discover that being most truly oneself requires being for others.

Qualities of Mature Faith Discipleship (OHWB)

Living Faith - Faith is living and active, sharing many of the qualities of living things: it grows and develops over time; it learns from experience; it adapts to changing conditions while maintaining its essential identity; it goes through seasons, some apparently dormant, others fruitful.

Explicit Faith - Adult faith is clearly and explicitly rooted in a personal relationship with Jesus lived in the Christian community.

Fruitful Faith - The adult disciple enjoys *the fruits of the Spirit*, which are "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal 5:22-23). Mature faith is open to the action and power of God's Spirit and cannot remain idle or unproductive. Where the Spirit is active, faith is fruitful.