The Building Blocks of My Faith

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Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"From the time I was an infant, my family has been immersed in the Catholic Church and its faith. Our Church, St. Mary's, always left me in awe with the sun shining through the stained glass windows and the larger than life statues of religious pioneers smiling down upon me. I was baptized, confirmed, and attended Sunday school at St. Mary's and I believe that this strongly molded me into the person I am today. By also attending a Catholic school for eleven years, I feel as though this helped build a strong relationship with my Church and my family because they were always involved. My family was the biggest influence on me, and my mother and grand-mother especially guided me in my faith."
The Building Blocks of My Faith

From the time I was an infant, my family has been immersed in the Catholic Church and its faith. Our Church, St. Mary’s, always left me in awe with the sun shining through the stained glass windows and the larger than life statues of religious pioneers smiling down upon me. I was baptized, confirmed, and attended Sunday school at St. Mary’s and I believe that this strongly molded me into the person I am today. By also attending a Catholic school for eleven years, I feel as though this helped build a strong relationship with my Church and my family because they were always involved. My family was the biggest influence on me, and my mother and grand-mother especially guided me in my faith.

My family is from Germany, and still lives there today, so when I visited my grand-mother as a child, I remember going to Church every time. I loved my Church in Germany and loved to see that even around the world, faith and religion are the same and we all believe in something greater than ourselves. I truly felt as though this helped me to connect to the German community, and any new Church congregation I happened to encounter. This is what amazes me
about religion, that it brings people of all walks of life together, and I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to grow up in the Catholic Church.

Another very important aspect of growing up, was that before bed each night, my mother would pray with me or sit with me as I recited my prayers. One very critical religious concept that my mother taught me was: when things get tough and seem hopeless, praying always helps. The repetition of prayer and knowing that someone is listening and caring about your worries is more than reassuring. I especially found this to be beneficial when I left for college. I had a difficult time transitioning into a new life away from home and my comfort zone. This was the point when I would turn to prayer to keep me calm and remind myself that nothing was hopeless because I would always have my faith to lean on. It was more difficult for me to be away from home for a number of reasons. At school, I did not go to Church every Sunday and I felt as though I was losing my faith and I carried around a great deal of guilt about it. I felt disconnected with myself and with my family because going to Church on Sunday was something that always brought us together. After some time, I realized that it didn’t matter if I wasn’t able to go to Church as frequently as I used, because of what my mother had taught me. You keep your faith and beliefs with you and do not need to be in a place of worship to consolidate them. If I didn’t have my mother in this situation to reassure and keep telling me to have strength in my faith, I would have struggled to get through each day.

Being a part of a religious community, I feel extremely grateful that I was able to grow up and learn from my parents about my faith. I believe that the affirmation from my family and the support I received from them, helped to strengthen my relationship with my faith. Realizing now just how influential and pertinent was the role that my family played in my religious upbringing, makes me want to do the same for my children and family in the future.