
Children of the Spirit... Faith in the Young...

We live in a world today that has many conflicting and ambiguous statements relating to Children. We have on the one hand child protection policies in order to eradicate Child Abuse but on the other hand are slow to acknowledge that it is prevalent and look for the causes. We uphold children's rights to food, shelter, housing, but we live in a world where disease and poverty still afflict many children. We uphold the value of life yet stand by when children in some parts of the world die through war and persecution. We give children challenges and encouragement for a better life, education but limit this scope to externals and some personal fulfilment but totally forget that children, or anyone for that matter, are not merely physical beings but Spiritual ones and that emotional and spiritual needs too, have to be met. We continue to give children mixed messages about many things and expose them to ideas and actions which they cannot truly comprehend, all in the name of progress.

Both as a parent and grandparent, catechist, teacher, and founder of a Childrens Charity for Abused Children which became a voice for the voiceless I became increasingly aware of the rôle that faith plays in the life of children and how this is often played down as either less important or indeed irrelevant. Further it is often dismissed as 'indoctrination' even when there is little evidence to support this and there are signs that something inherently beautiful is present in the spirit of the young.

It has often been a source of encouragement to me too, when in spite of adverse circumstances, I have witnessed the power of conviction in Children and a determination to help others which seem to come unexpectedly and unreservedly. Children have not only demonstrated great courage and endurance but have brought about change in the societies that they live in.

I have also pondered the reality of the rôle that children have played in both the Old and the New Testament of the Bible with almost no or little recognition of this fact save a passing reference and this at a time in History when children were given little scope for importance.

In recent times, apart from, as a result of martyrdom, the holiness of children has been acknowledged and many have been raised to importance as Saints. Please see Ladder Saints/Children.

It cannot be simply good fortune or circumstance that these young ones are capable of such great things when in terms of years, experience, or education they would not be considered able for such action.

In view of this I have tried to bring to the fore the role played by children in various circumstance and indeed children of different backgrounds and faiths as well as cultures. The insights and straightforwardness of little ones can often be a great challenge for us and beg the necessary questions such as the origins of their thought and action. Religion seems not to be considered important in these days, yet where the inspirations for these little ones and actions come from is never given a second thought.

I hope that the examples and by no means an exhaustive list of these wonder-full children makes us all think of the nature and purpose of both creation and 'A Creator' whose love is abundant and whose inspiration and guidance leads these to perform a significant contribution to faith.



See 'Saints' ... Subsection 'Children Saints'