

“How to” videos are amazing! I am teaching myself a new fly fishing technique, so off to YouTube to watch videos on the process and how to tie new knots.

There are “how to” videos on so much...how to cook food and different kinds of meals; how to fix the toilet, rewire a socket, how to sew, crochet, knit; how to raise a child and how to NOT raise a child...endless opportunities to learn something.

We know we have progressed when we no longer need the video and can accomplish the task at hand on our own: we can place water into a pot, turn on the heat, add some salt and when the water starts to boil add the pasta, no need to consult.

I did a search; there are videos on “How to become Catholic”, meaning joining the OCIA. There were no videos I could find on “How to BE Catholic.”

That is a good thing.

We Catholics are famous/infamous for policies, protocols, rules and regulations. Necessary because they provide a framework, a skeleton if you will, for the basics of what it means to follow Jesus as a Catholic. Such rules as it is necessary to attend Mass each Sunday; it is necessary to fast before Mass; we need to pray each day and others.

People too want to know what are the basics...what do they need to do minimally to get something...baptism, marriage, confirmation, a “full mass”

Yet there is more to a life in Christ isn't there. There is so much more life to being a Catholic.

The scholar approaches Jesus and asks about the rules. He affirms he follows the rules and Jesus commends him for this, but... it was not enough. The scholar wanted to justify himself, the Gospel said; he wanted validation that this was all that he had to do. He only wants to do the basics.

Jesus takes him to another level of faith...will the scholar go for it?

Nobody at first in the parable is the neighbor; nobody knows anyone in this story. Neighbors do not happen, neighbors are made. We make ourselves neighbors to each other.

The Samaritan saw the wounded man and made himself neighbor to the one in need. The man was naked and unconscious, so there was no indication to the Samaritan of who he might be or where he may be from...it did not matter.

He was a person in need and he, the Samaritan, was the person to take care of that need.

The others followed the rules and regulations, which kept them closed off.

I have met "Good Catholics" those who obey the rules and regs; and to be honest some are warm persons and others are the coldest, meanest persons.

The difference being their hearts and what they put into the faith
The Samaritan gave flesh, bone and blood to the meaning of faith.

When have we taken an opportunity to make ourselves a neighbor to someone? When have we taken the opportunity to go beyond simply what is minimally necessary and be more?

When we did so, did we find a new friend? Develop a community, did we save a life?

God, in Jesus, made a neighbor of us, even more so...we are God's family, God's children. God heals us, binds our wounds, offers us an opportunity for life.

God offers to us the way to live free of our hatred and anger, our sadness and grief; to live a life in the full, with joy, even amid the chaos.

God provides us an answer to the evil and hurt in this world...and it is our choice to answer evil and hurt with compassion, kindness, generosity, with patience and humility; and also with the courage to call out the evil that is present.

Evil that rejects the dignity of all persons, regardless of any superficialities we place on them.

Evil that will rip apart families; lead to persons harming themselves and others because they find no hope.

God calls upon us to act as God; to be in the world and be neighbor, brother and sister to each other; to be church.

This can't be forced with rules.

It can't be placed within us by our merely following a "How to.." video
It will not be done by merely doing the minimum.

To live life fully and eternally, to work with God to enhance our world means we go beyond. We take the opportunity to open ourselves to the grace God gives.

We open our minds, hearts and souls to the reality of God's love for every human person; and make that ours as well.

God does not give us the minimum, basic grace...God pours it all in. We receive all of the Son in our communion, to be as the Son, to live as the Son.