



Michelle Mantor

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I'm sitting down to write this essay on November 17, a very bittersweet day for me. Thirty years ago today, my father was murdered in a very senseless, cold-hearted crime. He was a gentle, kind man that I loved immensely and was so undeserving of this act that it caused me to call into question everything I believed about God. I was devastated and angry and I wondered if there really was a divine creator or if we just exist in a random, meaningless state of evolution. In short, my FAITH was being severely tested and for a time, lost altogether.

Fast forward 15 years later on November 17, I gave birth to my first child, a healthy baby boy. Interestingly, he was not due until mid December but prematurely made his entrance into the world 5 weeks early. I had worked through many of my issues surrounding my father's death and my FAITH was in much better shape but the birth of my child on this day, turning the saddest day of my life into one of great joy was surely, to me, an act of divinity. It put into perspective that through our pain, through times of adversity and through our seemingly uphill battles, we gain strength, wisdom, resiliency and empathy. We grow in mind and spirit.

Having FAITH might be one of the most challenging facets of humanity. FAITH means believing without proof, giving your self over to something not in your control. This is a vulnerable place to

be. I find it a juxtaposition between fear and hope - a fear that my hope and expectancy may be naïveté. But in the end, my FAITH prevails because of my trust and belief in a divine source.


It's not uncommon to hear of clergy speak about times of doubt in their own FAITH. When they witness a disaster of epic proportions like the recent hurricane in the Philippines or the pain of just one person, perhaps a mother that has lost a child to cancer, it is challenging to find the good, to see light, to understand "why", to trust that there is a purpose. These are natural emotions but without sorrow there is no joy, without loss there is no appreciation.

FAITH, being that it's steeped in trust, is not just an intellectual element. It also goes to matters of the heart; meaning that FAITH consumes our entire being and life experience and the whole of one's self is caught up in believing.

Here's what I know about FAITH: whenever I am in doubt, which as a human I will undoubtedly sometimes experience doubt, I look around me and I'm reminded of the inexplicable nature of our world. There are miracles taking place as people overcome disease, there is awe-inspiring beauty in the perfect markings on an Orca whale or the cute little dots on a ladybug and there are mesmerizing acts of transformation such as a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. Even my little Yorkie mix "Sake" shows me everyday the unique nature of canine companionship.

It's easy to take some of these things for granted because they are common in our surroundings. But if you really think about their awe-inspiring, perfect design, it's not hard to have FAITH that they are not accidents but rather designed with purpose, love and greatness.

So today as I write on my son's 15th birthday, I am filled with FAITH, hope and joy as well as thankfulness that my life experiences have been diverse and challenging at times thus providing the platform for an imperfect life - the best tool for teaching FAITH... being sure of what I hope for and certain of what I do not see.



*This holiday season,
may you honor those
you love and reach
out a helping hand to
those in need. Best
wishes for a magical
Christmas and
joyous New Year.*