



A Leap of Faith

by Deacon Ken Miles

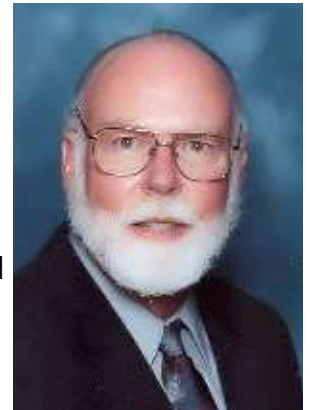
As much as we like to celebrate it, or wish we could change it, the family in which we grew up forms us all. For me, it was a loving and supportive family, but one in which religion and faith did not play a role. In our family, personal achievement and personal responsibility were the hallmarks of success. Even to the point where, if something didn't go right, it was certainly our fault, and if someone needed something, it was our job to help them out. Now that is not all bad, but as I said, religious faith did not play a part; it was more the "cultural faith" in which we grew up, not necessarily bad, just different from where I am today.

It was in my very early 20s that faith became a necessary ingredient in my life, a faith in God. Faith is "the complete trust or confidence in someone or something," as defined in the Oxford Dictionary. Trust is "firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something," from the same source. These definitions are very similar, and seem to point to each other in a bit of a circular structure. At that time in my life, something, which today I'd call the actions of the Holy Spirit, called me to look beyond what I knew, or could know, and see the something broader and grander that was the foundation of all. For me, from my upbringing, this was certainly a transformational event and journey, one I have not regretted traveling. But it certainly called me to that classic "leap of faith", even if I didn't have to step out into space (if you remember from *Indiana Jones*).

Trusting in God has been a very personal journey for me, so I cannot reflect on our Parish Theme for the year without doing so from a very personal perspective. There have been many times when I do not understand what is happening, or why, but have had to live out that trust, to have faith and carry on. When I was applying to enter the Deacon Formation Program, I had also taken the GMAT exam to apply for the MBA Program and the University of Chicago. When I was accepted to both, and could only do one, a lot of reflection and prayer went into trying to decide what I should do, what God was calling me to. The MBA would certainly help me in my work at Argonne National Laboratory, but is that where I was being called? Obvi-

ously, I chose the diaconate and have never regretted that decision. One of the reasons I wished to do my reflection for September is because the 14th, it will be my 24th anniversary of my ordination.

After about 15 years of working at Argonne, our project was shutting down, and I needed to find a new group to work with. This kept me up many a night in cold sweats and worry, as many people have experienced, especially recently with the economic downturn. Through much prayer and reflection, it seemed God wanted me to stay where I was since I couldn't feel any nudges to move to a different place or job, so I turned my fears over to God, trusted that God would lead me where I should go, and began looking at the opportunities at the Lab. It all worked out.



Even recently, when I was cut back to half-time unexpectedly, it seemed I was still where God wanted me, so I continued to trust and have faith, and a new project came up and I'm back to full time.

For me, Trusting in God has been, as is, a very personal thing, a relationship I thrive on and work on. It might not lead to the most money, the most power or a lack of problems. But when I do my part and have faith, trusting that God will lead me, I find the joy of my family and what I do as a deacon bring God's presence so very close. Not mention the joy of knowing that I am not sole one responsible for anything that goes wrong (yes, those family tapes still have a tendency to play).

In God We Trust, for me, has become a way of life, and one that bring the ultimate joy and happiness. For ultimately, where can we really place our faith and trust, but in God.

This is another in a series of reflections on our parish theme that will be written by our parish pastoral ministers.