

Father John Catoir

# Childlike, Not Childish

Act as if everything depended on you, and pray as if everything depended on God. You probably have heard that truism before, but some problems are so severe you may feel powerless to act as though everything depended on you. It is then that you have to turn it all over to God and trust him.



With God's grace, all things are possible. Ask for a miracle, and expect one.

To understand more about this state of absolute trust, I turned to Blessed Julian of Norwich. She compared a mother's love to the love and service of Jesus.

A mother's service is completely dependable because it is the most loving and certainly the truest service we know. Since Jesus performs this loving service to an infinite degree, Julian referred to him as "Mother God." She wrote, "The Lord carried us within himself in love and pain when he suffered the sharpest thorns and the most daunting agony." We can trust the Lord.

If your trust is weak, don't be discouraged. One day he will give you the precious gift of a childlike spirit. "Ask and you will receive." When Jesus challenged us to put on a childlike spirit, he was encouraging us to be childlike not childish. A childish person can be arrogant, demanding and inconsiderate.

When you approach God do not be childish. The childlike spirit is full of

trust. Even the most unruly children do not worry about how their next meal will appear on the table. They trust their parents to take care of their basic needs, and in the same way God will take care of your needs. Trust him and be patient.

In discerning the meaning of a childlike spirit, the key word is "trust." Trust is the only thing that is uniquely ours to give. God gave us everything else we have. When Jesus asked us to become childlike, he wanted us to have absolute confidence in his love. This means we have to learn "to let go and let God."

Personally I find this difficult to do. I pray, but I often tend to carry the full weight of my burdens until I realize what I'm doing. Then I stop in my tracks and turn the problem over to him. I put my trust in his power and love.

Imagine giving a trustworthy friend a task to do for you and then worrying all night about whether or not it will be done. It just doesn't make sense.

Do you have to contend with a rebellious child or a difficult aging parent? Stop trying to engineer a solution. It is beyond your strength to change the personality of another human being. Only the other person can do that, and then only with the help of God's grace. The role of grace is the mysterious element in this process.

Once you turn the responsibility over to the Lord, all you can do is thank him for the graces he will send. Try not to demand immediate results. Wait and trust.

Patient endurance is what the saints do best.