

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ!

I wish to give a simple testimony regarding our experience on passing on the faith to our children.

My name is Tobias Spandri, I am Italian, grew up in Venice, I have lived in Munich for 35 years, I have been married for 30 years, my wife Rosi is here, we have 8 children (ranging in age from 28 to 13) and 3 grandchildren born recently. We are part of the Neocatechumenal Way.

Like almost all parents, we have also found ourselves with children at the age of puberty, with the normal identity crises and necessary emotional detachment from parents. However, this is also the age when confirmation often becomes the farewell party to the Church.

What has helped us as parents and our children?

Certainly not our capabilities, but basically 2 things:

1. Like us years before, our children also began their own faith journey in their own neocatechumenal community in the parish. A community made up of diverse people: laity and presbyters, poor, rich, old, young, far and near, baptized and unbaptized; touched by the Kerygma, brought together in listening to the word and sustained by the sacraments they walk a path of Christian initiation.
The concrete form of synodality we live in these small communities was inspired by the Virgin Mary to Kiko Argüello: *"We need to make communities that live like the Holy Family of Nazareth, in humility, simplicity and praise. The other is Christ."*
The Other is Christ. There where, as Jean Paul Sartre said in one of his works, we have often experienced "The others, they are hell," in the small community we slowly begin to discover, stage by stage and in the freedom of personal adherence, the deep communion between people. We all become brothers and sisters.
Even a handicapped son of ours or a sister of mine with Down syndrome are included in their neocatechumenal communities because they are considered siblings first and foremost and not different.
2. Sunday liturgies of family praise. The whole family, gathered to pray praise and all, even we parents place ourselves "under the word" and, in dialogue with our children give them our concrete witness of faith. This especially helps fathers who have often left faith education to their wives, but through these simple liturgies they establish a deep and personal relationship with their children, not only regarding faith. Here, too, we walk together as a family to meet Christ.

All this ad maiorem dei gloriam! Thank you