**WHAT FAITH MEANS TO ME**

When Sharon asked me to share 'What Faith Means To Me', a number of thoughts came immediately to mind, but I wanted to start with the definition. Christian faith is defined as the experience of living in a dynamic and personal relationship with God, through the transforming power of Jesus in your body and life. The personal relationship that each of us has with God shapes the foundation of our faith.

Several weeks ago, in one of her homilies, Sharon used the phrase 'Cradle Anglican'. Although I wasn't a cradle Anglican, I was definitely a CRADLE CHRISTIAN. I was born in Regina, Saskatchewan and as with most prairie families, Church, Sunday School and Prayer were a key part of my family's weekly activities. At that point in my life, my faith was likely more expected or assumed than understood. It did however, provide me with a solid basis upon which I could build, as I grew older.

My faith in God has always played a key role in my life. As the years went by, I have felt his strong presence and guidance during important events, like the day that Donna and I were married, the birth of our children (Erin and Craig), the days they were baptised and confirmed and the birth of our grandchildren.

The time in my life when I felt closest to God was during the birth of our daughter Erin. On May 8th, 1978, she was delivered by caesarean section at Lions Gate Hospital. From her first breaths of life, the physicians knew she was very ill and immediately called for the Infant Transport Team, from Vancouver General Hospital, to make the trip to North Vancouver. They would help stabilize our little girl and take her to the Intensive Care Nursery or as we came to know it over the coming weeks, the ICN.

Although the exact words were not said, it was very apparent, the doctors did not think that Erin would survive. Donna having gone through the c-section, was unable to go to VGH to see her until the following Saturday. On Tuesday morning, after a very long night at Lions Gate Hospital, I went to the ICN to see Erin and talk to the specialists. They explained to me in great detail, the extent of the internal damage she was suffering and the specific protocols they would follow in the coming weeks.

Later that day, when I saw Erin, she was laying motionless on a treatment table, in a medically induced coma, to let all of the powerful drugs and medications do their job. From the moment I walked into that room, I felt the unbelievable presence of someone with me--GOD and I knew from that moment on, she was going to be alright, despite the seriousness of her condition.

God did not renege, after a long fight, eight weeks in the ICN and countless follow-up appointments, over the years, with specialists at Children's Hospital, I am happy to report that Erin has zero side-effects. She is a grown woman, with a wonderful husband, two amazing children of her own and is still a fighter, in absolutely the best way possible. I have felt God's direct presence, his hand on my shoulders, many times, but none with the impact and significance of that night in May of 1978.

The presence of God can also manifest itself through his servants. The days following Erin's birth were extremely challenging for both of us but especially Donna, as she had to wait four long days before doctors allowed her leave Lions Gate to visit Erin in the ICN at Vancouver General.

Fred Thirkell, our Rector from St. John's came to visit Donna and shared some words that reinforced our faith. He said "special babies need special parents" and we asked God to help us be the best parents we could be. Molly Koning, who was the Nursing Supervisor in the Maternity Unit at Lions Gate, visited Donna several times to provide comfort and hope. Helping Donna cope with the seemingly insurmountable challenges that lay ahead. Both Fred and Molly reinforced the importance of faith and our trust in God, and his servants, during their visits with Donna.

I want to close by talking briefly about my faith as it relates to business. With the drive for success and the focus on financial numbers it is very easy to forget one's faith, as one seeks to strive to finish on top in the face of ever-growing competitive and financial pressures.

To me, integrating faith into business practices means holding myself to a high standard of ethical and morale behaviour. My style of leadership is one of respect--I greatly value the opinions of my direct reports and my colleagues. I try to always treat them in the way that I would like to be treated. A very simple objective but something that has always worked well for me.

My faith whether it be personal or business-related is truly dynamic, with definite highs and lows. The one constant, is the comfort and direction, I receive from God. I know, that regardless of the challenges that lie ahead, I will never be alone.

Thank you.