

## **Apologetics: It's Not About Saying Your Sorry**

*“Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence. ” (1 Peter 3:15)*

The term apologetics is quite often misunderstood for many people. So what exactly is apologetics? First and foremost it is a branch of Theology and comes from an ancient Greek word ‘apologia’ which literally means an apology. But the ancient sense of the word means to make a reasonable defense or justification of something. Apologetics is all about knowing why we do what we do and believe what we believe. When we unexpectedly find ourselves having to explain an aspect of our Catholic faith, there are some basic apologetic rules and advice one may follow that will give a sense of ease and confidence: 1). Pray to the Holy Spirit to give you the courage to share your faith and the wisdom to choose your words. (Wisdom is one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit) 2). NEVER stop learning about our Catholic faith. In order to discuss and/or explain a topic, we have to know something about it. We are called to set forth the “what and why” of the Catholic teachings. Once we understand our faith, we can share our knowledge rather than misinformation. 3). Your faith must be genuine and formed by charity and patience. We must submit ourselves to God by believing what He says is true, loving Him above all things and loving our neighbor as ourselves. 4). Always remember that the conversion of hearts is the job of the Holy Spirit not you. Your goal is not to win an argument. Just plant the seeds and let the Holy Spirit take care of the rest. We must keep love and patience in our hearts. Apologetics requires us to have a lot of patience. By doing so it insures us that we are able to listen with **charity** and explain with **clarity**. Charitable apologetics rejoices not over wrongdoings, but in truth. It bears all things, believes in all things, and hopes in all things and most importantly it endures all this for the love of God. Charity is the greatest of the theological virtues. It is the virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake and love our neighbor as ourselves for love of God. (CCC 1822) When we discuss our faith with charity and patience in our hearts, we are uniting ALL of us completely to God.

(Sherrie Clutts - Director of Religious Education)