

Testimony

Hello, my name is Ann Veronique. I am married and have 4 children. I am a stay at home mom. My husband and I have been a part of Bordeaux's school of prayer for the last four years.

Tonight I would like to address two aspects of my life of prayer: first, how I discovered silent prayer and secondly its positive effects in my life.

My husband and I first encountered silent prayer through Our Lady of Life ministries. I felt it was a type of prayer that was simply out of reach for someone like me. It was a type of prayer reserved for monks and nuns, you know, with a lot of experience, the Jesus 'PROs'.

However, in 2009 we attended a school of prayer during Lent. At the second meeting I was given the gift of silent prayer. Jesus met me through one of my weak points—my laziness. I had wanted to meet Jesus for a long time but had no idea how to go about it.

As the Carmelite friar was talking about silent prayer. I suddenly realized that it was the prayer for me as he was saying that it was easy, that there was nothing to do and that it was all about just giving Jesus 5-10 minutes a day and he would do it all.

My reaction was immediate. I was filled with a great joy! I knew silent prayer was for me because there was nothing for me to do! In the midst of this very human reaction, I felt a great peace fill my being. I knew that silent prayer would allow me to enter into a relationship with him and that I would remain united to Jesus for the rest of my life.

It is quite hard to put into words this unforgettable moment of great joy and peace. How do I explain the unshakable certainty that I had. I knew that I had found the solution to my weakness—-I had nothing to do, he would do it all. I also knew that I had found the way to establish the relationship with him that I had been looking for. The key was silent prayer.

This leads me to my second point, the positive effects of prayer. I would say that it's grace. I was given a desire to tell Jesus I loved him several times a day like when you're in love. I began to set aside time for him to get to know him better.

Silent prayer really changed my life in both a radical and a gentle way. When I say radical I mean that my priorities changed. An example of this is that I am here with you rather than engaging in one of my passions, tennis for example which takes a lot of time. I came to know with certainty that I have always been loved by Jesus and would be forever. Knowing that I am eternally loved by him fills me with a deep and lasting peace and helps me a lot especially in difficult times. When I say my life was transformed gently, I mean that gradually over time, taking into consideration my strengths and weaknesses, Jesus helped me to set aside several moments for him during the day.

Another thing that Jesus did for me was to turn me towards his mother. He pushed me into her arms by inviting me to regularly pray the rosary which is a bit of a chore for me. By praying the rosary I have come to know and to love Mary. I get the feeling that the more I am with her the more she sends me back to the arms of her Son.

Mass during the week has become a necessity for me. I have also become aware of my guardian angel. He reminds me of my times of prayer. He's very present. I also enjoy reading the Carmelite saints. It has really helped me and created in me a real desire to experience union with God. As time went on, I also started to experience a desire for a spiritual father. At first it was to impress others but it has become an important part of my life.

Honestly I forget so many of the good things that have happened in my life since I began to practice silent prayer. God is really generous. To think that my life is structured around prayer astounds me. It is really a miracle for a naturally lazy person like myself. This is a tangible sign of his presence in my life through silent prayer. Left to my own devices I would never be able to sustain this level of spiritual activity.

Time spent with the Lord doesn't take away time from my other obligations. Putting him first has made me much more efficient in the other areas of my life. Silent prayer, a friendship with Christ, is quite compatible with all lifestyles personal and professional.

Once my time of prayer complete, I am filled with a peaceful assurance that the essential part of my day has taken place. Another effect of prayer is that Jesus slowly heals self-centeredness. It's a long, hard process that's never really finished. Silent prayer allows us to know ourselves. Grace allows us to see with greater discernment our faults and our weaknesses. It's a real blessing to be able to see our misery. It encourages us to ask the Lord for help and to learn what he wants for us.

So today I can say that I have a friendship with Jesus. I talk to him and he teaches me through his Holy Spirit...and so goes the friendship. It is really the prayer that is completely adaptable to all types of lifestyles. It's a custom-made prayer.

John Paul II told us not to be afraid and Benedict 16 pointed out that Jesus doesn't take away anything but rather he gives everything.

Ann Veronique, Bordeaux 2017