

## Testimony

**Background:** I come from a practicing Catholic family but since I discovered silent prayer I don't live out my faith in the same way anymore. I am 44 years old. I have been married to Erwan for 21 years. We have 7 children from 19 to 2 1/2 years old.

**Discovery of Silent Prayer:** In 2008 we were invited to be a part of a school of prayer. We didn't understand that we had been invited to teach it. We had heard about silent prayer through the *teams of our Lady* but we had never practiced it. So right from the start of the school, wanting to be credible instructors, we began a daily practice of silent prayer.

**Where to Practice Prayer:** Some people might prefer a church or another sacred place to practice prayer but I believe prayer should be practiced at **home**. I am a stay at home mom. Jesus is in our home. In a way, he is a member of the family.

**Silence** is the most important element for prayer however it's hard to come by in a family setting. We decided that the morning was an ideal time to pray because the younger children were still asleep. The evening wouldn't work because our older children wanted to interact with us then and would come to us with questions.

My husband and I discovered silent prayer together, so we decided to pray together. At first we were a bit embarrassed but after a few prayer classes this embarrassment disappeared. Today we are very happy to sit next to one another and pray together in silence.

**Prayer Logistics:** We set up a **prayer corner** in our living room where we put a candle and a crucifix on the chimney. We also have the readings of the day and a kneeler available. We begin either sitting, kneeling or standing by calling on the **Holy Spirit**. It is hard to detach from the world. We really need his help. I may begin by giving thanks or presenting my requests but at some point I strive to eliminate any thoughts to make room for God. This is his time. It belongs to him. But it isn't easy because distractions continually come to mind.

**Distractions:** Yet despite our best efforts, distractions are continual. It isn't easy to eliminate them. These are a few techniques I use to come back to Christ. The first is **singing**. St Augustine tells us that singing is praying twice. I praise and worship him silently in the depths of my heart. I find hymns that say exactly what I want to say to the Lord. Sometimes I put myself in a **Bible scene** and look at Christ to re-center my thoughts on him. It may be at the cross with Mary and John, or I become the Samaritan woman from whom he asks a drink or one of the little children that Jesus liked so well. What's important is to always be focused on Jesus who is fully God and fully man. He is incarnate not just pure spirit. We are human beings and we like the tangible. It is reassuring for us to see his face, to see that he prayed to his father as we do; that he had emotions; that he cried. In his humanity he is close to us. He reassures us. I also like to use the **readings** of the day. If my mind wanders I read the Gospel or a Psalm to come back to Christ.

I also focus on the **flame of the candle** and think of my prayer going up to God. Sometimes too, I look at the **icon** or the **crucifix**...at Christ... and venerate him.

**The Impact of Prayer in my Life:** it is important for our children to see their two **Christian parents praying**; that prayer is a part of our lives and not just empty talk. It also helps them to love Jesus. John Paul II said that it was very powerful for him to see his father praying. Sometimes when I can't find time to pray first thing in the morning I am obliged to take time later in the morning with my youngest on my lap. Of course the concentration is more difficult but it is up to me to transmit an attitude of the sacred and of prayer. The older children have learned to respect the silence in the morning when they see us praying together as a couple.

**Dryness & Aridity:** even though there are times when prayer is difficult, remaining loyal to the practice ends up paying off. My day is lived out differently if I have spent time in prayer early in the morning.

**Common Complaint:** people often tell me that they don't **hear** anything during prayer. I have never actually heard a voice. But if I think about it I find answers to questions while in prayer. What I initially thought were distractions, were ideas that I wouldn't have had on my own, ideas that would just come into my mind. Of course, this doesn't happen every day. It is not a magic recipe but God is always trying to talk to us. We have to practice understanding what is happening in prayer.

**What are the Fruits of prayer:** peace and inner joy; an ability to grow closer to others; to love others. This heart to heart with Jesus, this nearness to him, has had a big impact on our lives, even in difficult times. We are not alone. God loves us like a father. He wants our love. He waits for us every day. He begs for our love and our presence. He suffers when we ignore him or when we don't talk to him. He is like any father who hasn't heard from his children in awhile. Console the heart of God by telling him how much you love him. Offer him time daily and your life will be transformed.

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