

Find your Superpower: Quiet Time with God & the Power of a Retreat

Headline: How many times do we find ourselves having Good Intentions but fall short of meeting our goals simply because that dreaded word “Procrastination” gets in our way. Preaching to others on this topic is probably not going to be an effective tool but if we can garner some first-hand witness accounts from some fellow Fathers who’ve been on these Retreats & how it has positively impacted their lives we stand a better chance of getting our message across.

Objective: How many of us have been to Eucharistic adoration & came away with a feeling of peace having spent some quiet time in the presence of God. Well, spending some quiet time with God on a Retreat only magnifies that feeling tenfold. All of us face those daily life challenges of Family, Job & Relationships that when not tended to in a spiritual setting from time to time can lead us down a path of destruction. Just pumping the brakes & putting our relationship with God first can rectify some of those stresses making ourselves in the words of Matthew Kelly--“The best version of ourselves.” So let’s challenge ourselves by getting out of our comfort zones and make that Retreat!

Song Suggestion: The Summons or Be Not Afraid

Bible and Catechism Readings:

Matthew 10:27

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in the ear proclaim on the housetops.

1 Kings 19:11-12

Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by. Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the Earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Catechism 2713

Contemplative prayer is the simplest expression of the mystery of prayer. It is a gift, a grace; it can be accepted only in humility and poverty. Contemplative prayer is a covenant relationship established by God within our hearts. Contemplative prayer is a *communion* in which the Holy Trinity conforms man, the image of God, "to his likeness."

Saint:

Thomas Merton is not a Saint but rather was a Trappist Monk highly recognized for his book The Seven Storey Mountain. One of his famous quotes “If you want to find God, you must find yourself first.”

Vignette: – There once was a man of about 60 years of age who had recently just retired. He wasn't sure how this next chapter in his life was going to unfold only that he wanted to remain relevant whatever that meant. He had a bucket list with the usual agenda namely to spend some more time with his wife & kids, travel a bit and do some volunteer work. There was also one item on his list that stood out from the rest namely he wanted to go on a Silent Retreat. He felt he had put this off long enough & now was the time to cross this one off his list. He knew some friends from his Church that had gone on some Retreats & had found them to be life changing. In fact, a couple of them now made this an annual pilgrimage. So he decided he would make a Spiritual Retreat to the Abbey of Gethsemani. He found the Monks there & their simple way of life to be a moving experience. The Trappist Monks as they are known are trained in a discipline of heart and action to be responsive to the Holy Spirit and so attain purity of heart and a continual mindfulness of God's presence. My Retreat Master didn't preach so much to me as much as he made time to listen to me and the things that were weighing on my heart. In fact, I got the feeling he enjoyed hearing about my life outside the walls of the Monastery allowing for an interesting give & take between us. I came away with a feeling that true happiness can be found when we silence our hearts & take the time to spend some quality time in silence with God. Just like my friends, I've made a conscious decision I'm going to make this trek to the Abbey every year.

Questions for Large and Small Group Discussion:

What does it mean to "pray constantly"? How can I do this in my busy life? What are some opportunities to pray in my busy life?

What is contemplative prayer and how could I tap into that on a Silent Retreat?

Resources:

- 1. The Seven Story Mountain-by Thomas Merton
- 2. Jesuit Spiritual Center in Milford
<https://jesuitspiritualcenter.com/>
- 3. The Abbey of Gethsemini
<https://monks.org/>

Action Plan:

Maybe challenge your Small Group to attend a retreat together.

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