LORD, IT IS GOOD THAT WE ARE HERE

Sister Peter Marie

Growing up, my experience of the Catholic faith was primarily through Sunday Mass. My life centered little on God, who, to me, was some "being" way out there and had nothing to do with who I was or what I did. My two brothers and I sought everything through sports and friends, so when I graduated from high school, moved away from home, and went to the University of Nebraska, I thought I lost everything. I attempted to fill the holes with new friends, television shows, football games, food, and a treadmill, but they weren't filling me up like I wanted. I was not searching for a way to change my attitude about God because I thought my faith was boring and I didn't want to become "too religious."

Through a series of providential events, I agreed to join a FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) bible study with several other women my age. The first few months in this study were challenging because I knew zilch about Catholicism. They were also invigorating because a depth to life was being shown to me that I had never before experienced. God's love poured itself out through the other women in the study as I saw Catholics my age wanting more than anything to live their faith as the essence of their lives. I was hit hard as I realized, for the first time, that *Jesus is a Person*. I yearned to have a relationship with Him as our bible study was entering into deeper conversation about how much we are loved, wanted, and cherished by God. It was on a retreat half way through my freshman year that I was introduced to adoration, confession, daily Mass, and friends from the Newman Center who would deeply impact my experience of God throughout the next two years.

The hold of this supernatural reality grew strong. I became further involved with FOCUS and the Newman Center, and as my love for God grew more intense, I wanted, more than anything, to give everything to Him. The question of my vocation was put to the forefront especially as friends were deep into discerning marriage, the priesthood, and religious life. Not having gone to Catholic school, I didn't know what "vocation" or "discernment" meant, and I was unaware that nuns in habit still existed. The thought that God would want me to be *a nun* scared me because it wasn't what I had wanted. By this time, a few of my friends were entering the seminary. Others were taking steps with the desire to enter religious life and sharing with me their zeal for the call to be Christ's spouse. At home for the summer, before my junior year, my daily routine was scheduled around Mass and prayer time in front of the Blessed Sacrament. As I told God the fear and excitement of doing something radically different, He came to me in an intimately new way, and opened up my heart to desire something I never would have imagined.

Returning to Lincoln for the school year, I began looking at different religious communities to learn more about who they were and to experience their daily life. Two things stuck out to me as I was deepening in my understanding of religious life and seeing nuns for the first time. The sisters are normal people, and they have more joy than anyone else I've ever met. Their courage to be a witness exteriorly through their habit also attracted me as my desire grew stronger to show the world around me God's love. After spending more time with the C.K.'s, I grew to trust that the gift of religious life through this specific community is what Jesus had in store for me. And the gifts just keep on coming!

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