

A FAMILY JOURNAL

by Rita Munn

Ecclesiastes 11:5 Just as you know not how the breath of life fashions the human frame in the mother's womb, so you know not the work of God which he is accomplishing in the universe.

The Lord works intimately and continuously in our lives. I know this intellectually, but there are times when His nearness seems hidden. Times of sorrow or confusion can bring a feeling of being separated from God's sight.

I was experiencing one of these dark times in my life. A burden of sorrow had engulfed my spirit. I knew the Lord was with me, however I was confused because He did not appear to be removing the cause of my burden.

For several days I went about my daily chores in a distracted and hollow way. I was praying and asking to see God's power in my situation yet He remained (what appeared to me) silent.

My husband decided that a change of scenery would be beneficial to my mood. He suggested a late supper at a nearby restaurant. It was Sunday evening and the restaurant was nearly empty. Besides a few scattered diners, there was a party of 8 - 10 people. It was obvious that they had just come from church services as we overheard their conversation.

At their table sat a man with three young boys. By the way they acted toward one another it was easy to guess that they were his sons.

As we sat nearby, slowly eating and absentmindedly watching this happy group of people, I prayed within my spirit. "Dear Lord, please lift this cloud. Help me to see Your work in this burden You have asked me to carry."


No sooner had this prayer left my heart, than several waitresses came near the church party's table. "Please sing it for all of us," they asked. Without hesitation, the young man and his three sons stood up and began singing a beautiful acappella harmony.

I can not remember all the words because the first verse was so powerful, that it was all I heard.

**The God of the Mountain is
Also the God of the Valley.**

Jesus was speaking to me! I do not believe in coincidence, only Godincidence.

The Lord told me in that instant that He was with me in that valley, but more importantly, He is God while He is there. He remains all powerful, all knowing, and ever merciful.



I was comforted by this sign of God's faithfulness. I am certain that praying always, especially when it seems to be unheard, brings grace beyond measure. With that grace fortifying our spirit we are able to see what we may have otherwise missed. Just like Elijah, we will hear God in the whisper of the breeze.

That night the Lord did not remove the source of my sorrow but He helped me readjust my burden making it easier to carry. The Lord told me, miracles can happen in the valley because I am here. My spirit was refreshed and my hope renewed.


Praise God!

Lord let me always be open to Your presence. Help me each day to seek You and the knowledge of Your will for me. Let me trust in Your teaching to "Be not afraid," for You are always with me.

When I find myself in the midst of a spiritually dark time I try to remember that this time is a battle.

I have to keep these things in mind:

1. Remember who the opponent is and that the victory has been won. A spiritual battle is the Tempter's way of bringing fear and doubt into our lives so that we will lose sight of Jesus, Our Victor and King.
2. Receive the Sacraments frequently, especially Holy Eucharist. The graces gained from these beautiful fountains of love left to us by Our Lord are refreshment to our spirits and armor for the battle.
3. Talk with a priest or spiritual advisor who can help you see the path through the dark.
4. Take time to rest physically. A battle is tiring and our bodies need to recuperate. Fatigue lessens our ability to think clearly.
5. Eat wholesome foods. Too much sugar or caffeine makes me jittery and on edge, giving the Tempter an outlet for anger.
6. Focus on simple tasks that can be accomplished with ease. Arranging a vase of flowers, taking a walk with the children, mopping a dirty floor or cleaning up a messy kitchen get me moving forward and improves my outlook.
7. Remember to praise God and thank Him for His faithfulness. Ask that He show you signs of His Love and His presence. Make your every move a prayer. The devotion of the rosary is so powerful. Sometimes if I am unable to 'pray' the beads just holding my rosary is calming. It is like holding the Blessed Mother's hand. *
8. Ask for the prayers of family, friends, your Guardian Angel, and all the saints. The elect of Heaven are our cheering squad and desire to accompany us on this journey and if necessary they will carry us over the finish line.



I know that each of you has insights from the Holy Spirit and that the Lord has empowered you to work through your spiritually dark times. I feel very blessed by the Lord that He has given me this opportunity to share my thoughts with you. I thank Him for this gift. I pray for each of you that read my column and for all homeschooling parents each day when I pray the Second Glorious Mystery.

I will tell you that that difficult time in my life did pass and I feel closer to the Lord for His allowing me to see His power in the midst of darkness. We pray the evening prayers each night as a family. One of the verses says:

**Jesus Christ is Light of the world.
The Light no darkness can overcome.**

As followers of Jesus we are called to reflect the Light of Jesus to all those who may be in the darkness. Our witness as parents and teachers does just that in a quiet way. Homeschooling mothers and fathers seem to be the most compassionate group of people I have known. They are always willing to bring a casserole, say prayers, babysit, help out at church, or whatever is necessary. They are on the whole extremely open to the Holy Spirit.

* Do you remember the night that Bobby Kennedy was shot? I do. As he lay on the floor of the convention center, bleeding and mortally wounded, from out of nowhere someone thrust a rosary into his hands. Immediately he began moving the beads. I will never forget that image.

SOAP,

Rita

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About the Munn Family

Ronald and I were married in 1973. I had just graduated from St. Dominic School of Nursing and he from Mississippi State with a degree in Aerospace Engineering. The Lord was very generous when we prayed to have a family. He blessed us with 10 children and now 2 grandchildren.

We began homeschooling in 1996. Children are a gift from the Lord and He designed them to begin learning the moment they are created. It continues to be one of the greatest pleasures of my life to spend my days with my children. The Lord is so good!