

# *Spontaneous Prayer*

*A Memoir by Sister Cecelia*



*“When I pray, God is giving me the words to pray.”*

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I think that my knowledge of my vocation goes way back, especially getting into high school and then to college. I think I was more aware of following what the Lord wanted from me. I always enjoyed going to church and all of that, but I think that I really realized at that time that that was what I was supposed to do. I did everything else to make sure that that was true, but it was proved. I think through the Charismatic Renewal I got a lot, too. Charismatic Renewal really renews our baptism and our confirmation and all the gifts that the Lord gives to us through that. I think that is one of the reasons why I really appreciated the Charismatic Renewal. I think that the gifts of learning how to pray spontaneously and also being able to get a notion of how to pray when other people ask you to pray through the gifts of tongues. It helped me really get a sense that that was what the Lord really wanted from me. I think that the Charismatic Renewal made me more dependent upon the Lord and to know that He would do what I needed. I knew that to do what I had to do, He had to do it with me or within me.

As I got older, I realized that He was directing through me and that was how I was to pray. He did do that and I learned to depend upon what was going on within me with that. The Charismatic Renewal made me more aware of the power of the Holy Spirit and Our Lady. Also, the importance of being able to pray spontaneously for myself but also for other people became known. To be able to express what I thought, through the Lord, was going to help someone else—that was a gift. It wasn't just saying prayers out of my prayer book. It was expressing something that needed to be said.

I was looking for something. I think I've said that I went to that cloistered community. I didn't find at all what I was looking for there. When I came back I got into the Renewal right away and that's when I found what I was looking for. I think that was good because I didn't have to have it in a closed up place, but I got reassurance through the gifts that the Lord gives through the Charismatic Renewal to be able to live in the reality. I didn't need that cloistered community. I have no regrets whatsoever. I think because it made me be able to help other people too very much.

I help others by praying with them and for them. A lot of them have come into the Charismatic Renewal. It is a gift of prayer that you get yourself. I think it makes you realize that's what life is, what's going on in the prayer. All these other things aren't what is important, although it helps you to do what you need to do in all those other things. I think the Lord's presence is made more real, too. You have confidence that He's right there.

I was not able to pray spontaneously. I think a lot of people are like that, and I'm not saying that isn't good. A lot of people are only able to say "Our Father," "Hail Mary," "Glory Be," if somebody asks you to pray for them. That's fine, but it's not the same. If you pray and ask the Lord, in tongues or just praying, give me what needs to be done or said, then that does something for them, too. If it's really working, it's working. It's that confidence that you have a message and a reason to pray that helps with spontaneous prayer. I think it was the prayer that did it. I pray in tongues before someone who asks me to pray for them and I didn't have that ability before. I know many, many people don't. That is a confidence from God.

When I pray, God is giving me the words to pray, the reaction or the words to describe what is going on. I think the Lord does do that definitely. Now, I don't think I need as much

reading to do the praying. I get the knowledge and I get something going on within me that is responding to that bringing forth something, words coming from the Lord. That again is a good part of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that allow me to do that. It is refreshing so that you don't ever get tired of praying. It is spontaneous and applicable.

I knew my relationship had changed when I came back from the cloistered place and stared with the Charismatic Renewal. It was much more informal and normal. It was the way I should have been living and I think that is what should have been happening to Christians way back. It was accepted in the earlier church, but then they got away from it. To produce the spontaneity is what's refreshing about it. It's not that I know what I should say this Thursday as opposed to what I said last Thursday. It's not that kind of thing. I was aware of this change when I first started. That's why I wanted to help other people to learn that, and I know that it has affected them.

My one-on-one prayer is different from praying with someone else. It is more centered upon that other person, but it still the Lord doing it with you and giving you the response and showing you what to do. The Lord gave me assurance because we had a lot of opposition to the Charismatic Renewal and I had to have the assurance of the Lord that that was right and good to do. I had to have that sense within me, that doing it was a good thing because that's what He wanted. Obviously, I think it was. And I'm glad that it was.

Sometimes I feel like something should be happening that isn't happening, but never seriously thinking that God wasn't there. Now and then it's not as easy as other times, but I never feel that He's not there. I sometimes have to ask the Lord why He isn't helping me as much I think He should. Sometimes you think you need something and you want it right away, but it comes three or four days later. I never have any doubt that it's not going to happen. In many cases it might not be exactly what I want, but it's better and maybe a different direction. I had to continue to seek, also. I think I got the assurance, which is important. The assurance of the Lord is better than just depending upon people. Not by which you make your own God and have Him tell you what you want Him to tell you to do.

I definitely have time to pray in morning, hopefully for an hour or so in the afternoon before mass and then again at night. We used to pray to Our Lady one day a week, but never the Liturgy of the Hour. We used to have visits, but usually that spontaneous prayer of the rosary. That shouldn't be it, but it can't be enough. At night I try to give some attention to what happened in the day, prayer to our Lord, and some reading. Also, I read the Gospel of the next day's mass, something of what tomorrow's day is going to be.

I think prayer is like everything. If we don't do something to keep it going, it drifts off. We need to appreciate the tabernacle. He's there all the time and we give him so little time. He is a person, and He's doing it for us. I think we need to get a sense of that because we aren't doing it just because there is a blessed sacrament, but because there is that person there. I think praying to Our Lady too is important to appreciate all that she did. I think it hurts her when she sees how we do or can neglect Him. We just take advantage. In prayer, a lot of people say they want the angels to have charge over them. We have no problem at all with delivering the petitions, but as far as thank you's, very few are needed. How many times do we stop and thank the Lord, even at the end of the day? How often do we see what the Lord really does for us?

I think I prayed a lot before the Charismatic Renewal, but I think it was spontaneous after. It wasn't an effort that I have to do this or I have to do that kind of thing. It just produces

this stuff within me. Not that I'm 100% by any means, but it just changed my life. It's a new way of life.