

# The great grace of ‘pandemic prayer time’



Every night since March 15, my husband, Michael, and I have gone “live” on [OSV’s Simply Catholic Facebook](#) page to pray. We gather in front of my laptop at or a little after 9:30 p.m., depending on whether or not kid bedtime has gone smoothly, open our small Breviary, watch a short countdown, smile and say hello.

We usually begin our simple broadcast – that word seems funny there, but it’s the most accurate – by chatting about our day. Maybe we share a short children’s anecdote or a weather update or information about a saint’s feast day. We ask anyone watching to share any prayer intentions they might have in the comments section. Then we move into night prayer, alternating recitation of the antiphons and psalms, as if in a monastery. We wrap up with a few closing words (more if we’re feeling chatty; fewer if a baby is crying), and sign off with promises of being back the next night.

Our “pandemic prayer time” was kind of strange at first. We stared into a screen, essentially talking to ourselves, and wondered if anyone was out there. But as we progressed from the waning days of Lent, through a bizarre Holy Week, to an Easter Sunday and season like no other, it became less strange. And more enriching. March spilled into April turned into May, and we began feeling carried along by a wave of grace.

If I think back to why we first decided to go “live” for night prayer every night, it was because we thought that, without public Masses and with social distancing, there might be people “out there” who were starved for community. And we thought we might be able to help.

But, as usually happens when embarking upon something that you consider to be a “good deed,” I think it’s ended up helping us more than anyone else. During a time when the days had a way of blending together, when not much was changing, we found a new kind of rhythm that helped us mark time, slow down and be grateful. We had a designated time and spot to pray that couldn’t get pushed aside for one reason or another. Being accountable to others, as it so often does, helped us be accountable to ourselves.

I wouldn’t say our “ratings” are through the roof. Our 60-plus videos have gotten anywhere from 300 to 900 views each. But, especially in recent weeks, a small but dedicated group of people has started to gather regularly, and I believe that those who log on are really praying. And not just with us, but together – with one another. They leave their own prayer intentions, but also comment on and react to those of others. They have invited friends to join us. Our own family members have joined us – some when able, some regularly. It has become a time of spiritual togetherness during a time of global apartness, and we believe that the Holy Spirit is active in helping people find us when they need us.

Usually after we log off, Michael and I remain in prayer – either praying the Rosary or the Divine Mercy Chaplet, or a novena or litany. We sit for a few moments by ourselves, watching the candles on our home altar – built out of necessity during a pandemic, but which will stay out of love – flicker in the still room. We’ve made it through another day, all praise and thanksgiving to God. And I am grateful. For the gift of my husband, for the gift of our faith, and for the small but mighty Simply Catholic community and the loving Father who has brought us together.

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