

The Simplicity of How God Works

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LAST YEAR WAS MY FIRST YEAR as a high school campus minister. Part of my job was also teaching an “Approaches to Leadership in the Faith” class. Students had to apply and interview to be in this class, and they were then selected to be the retreat leaders, and leaders in our school community, for the year. I had a lot of freedom when it came to how I instructed the students and what I decided to teach them. I felt as though the most valuable thing I could do is take them to the chapel for the first 20 minutes of class each time I had them. To me, having them develop a personal relationship with Christ was the most important thing in which to invest.

While we were in the chapel, I would introduce the students to different forms of prayer. We would do *lectio divina*,

intercessory prayer, praise and worship, reflections for the liturgical seasons, etc. I always ended our time in the chapel by lifting up our prayers and intentions to Jesus through Mary, and then we would pray a Hail Mary together. After a while of me leading the Hail Mary, I had one of my students, Gabriella, ask if she could do it. I was more than happy to allow her to take the lead on our closing prayer!

Soon after, she was leading the Hail Mary every time we went in the chapel, and she took her job very seriously. While this may seem small, it meant so much to me that she wanted to take on this role. From the start of the year to the end of the year, I saw her not only grow in her faith but also have a desire to continue to grow.

Fast-forward to her graduating and going to college. I reminded her not to forget to say her Hail Mary every day. After her first couple of weeks in college, she sent me a text saying that she had been praying about things a lot and that she could definitely feel the Lord working in her. This was a moment that, quite honestly, made me emotional. It was when I was able to see, as the catechist, a conversion taking place. She went from just attending chapel time, to wanting to lead the Hail Mary for the class, to going to college and praying on her own. To this day, when I talk to her I remind her to pray her Hail Mary, and she reminds me to pray mine as well!

While this is something very simple, it shows me the action of God. The Lord took action in the 20 minutes of chapel time each class to open Gabriella's heart to the importance of prayer. When she made herself available to the Lord, he took action again, helping her to recognize that she can turn to him in prayer and seek a personal relationship with him. The Lord always desires to take action in the lives of my students; when I am able to witness a young man or woman allow him to do so, it is one of my greatest joys.

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