

Open My Heart, Lord

God opens many peoples' hearts every day through religious and pious people. Christians are called by name from God to spread the gospel around the world by becoming priests, deacons, and religious brothers and sisters. God truly loves each and every one of us without concern for the color of our skin, the religion we believe in, or the social culture we are accepted into. It's God's job to care and look out for His children. As a lay servant of my Church, I try to listen to the religious around me so I can grow closer to my God, my Creator. Accepting God's word is the question. Religious servants are out in the world to help, so lay people just need to listen.

Christ, our savior, has brought many people into my life. Father Justin, our former associate pastor and a good family friend, inspired me through his speeches, homilies, gatherings and celebrating the Eucharist. Watching Father Justin on the altar holding the Body and Blood of Christ in his hands brought chills to my arms. As a holy servant of God, he had the ability to turn bread and wine into our Redeemer. Father Justin taught me the importance of respecting our Father, for who He is, and that yes terrible events happen in our lives, but they are always for a reason. Pain and sorrow come into our lives, but that is God's way of saying slow down and watch what you are doing. Horrifically, Father Justin passed away at age 28, which made me realize that life can be short. He touched thousands of people's lives through his short time here on Earth. In our lives, we have to find time to listen to God and see where He wants us to take our journey. When disaster comes into our daily existence, I will forever know that it was God's plan and everything will be all right in the end. Father Justin educated me in my

religious life, teaching me the importance of hearing God's call and opening my heart unto Him.

Our class trip to the convent in 7th grade will never leave me. I remember watching the nuns in Mass singing their hearts out, pouring their thoughts, sorrows, and joys upon our Savior. The way the nuns stood, walked, and talked, I knew that God was forever inside of them. I recall one elder nun who was our tour lady who showed us around the convent. In the middle of a story she was telling our group about the history of the convent, her pager went off. The nun told us that God was calling and that she needed to leave for a short moment. I never thought twice about her reaction to the buzzer, just her simple words that God was calling her. The pager really was not from God, but that did not make any difference to me. I knew that God had spoken to her plenty of times in her life, and that she was quite right telling us God was calling. Through our busy lives, we need to sit back and realize that God is truly calling us. Whether it is through a pager or not, we need to know God wants us to listen.

The voice of God comes in different ways, so we need to be ready for His words. I have truly been blessed with the priests, deacons, and religious brothers and sisters around me to help me open my heart unto to Lord. Growing in my relationship with God consists of hearing His call, through priests, deacons, and religious brothers and sisters.