30 Days of Gratitude Challenge Day 18 — My Faith

I take what I need from my faith, my prayers and my belief that the best words I ever learned are "Pray, hope and don't worry."

November 18, 2018 By Lisa Vento Nielsen

This, of course, does not float everyone's boat, but I am so grateful for my faith and the quiet strength I have been able to pull from it.

I was raised Catholic and dragged to church every week no matter the issues in my family (and there were many) and I always thought that when I was on my own I would not go.

Then, I moved to Italy at 21 for my MBA — one of the most church-centered countries and I, in its capital of churches — Rome — in fact right outside of Vatican City.

I went to mass and I went to mass not only at the Vatican but also at the church on my block, Santa Maria Mediatrice (my address was Via Santa Maria Mediatrici, 21).

When I came home, everything happened so quickly — I was single, then dating, then met my husband and was engaged and married in a blink of an eye (it felt like decades but really only a few years) and then I had a child. And then another.

I was that mother — the one who brought my toddler and baby to church, alone, and dealt with the stares and the smiles and the head-shaking. My daughter often sat nicely in church, and for that grace I was paid back tenfold with my son who often wriggled away and found his way to the altar to dance.

I still went. When my daughter became an altar server in third grade I nearly burst with pride and excitement. Now it's my son's turn to be an altar server, and today both children will serve the mass together. I'm just praying no one throws the other off the altar.

I'm blessed in that I believe — not everyone does, and that's OK.

I am not unaware of the issues with organized religion, particularly Catholicism, and I wish I could fix it but I can't. Instead I take what I need from my faith, my prayers and my belief that the best words I ever learned (just recently, though I first heard of Padre Pio as a child) are "Pray, hope and don't worry."

This speaks to me and helps me through when I do not know how I will do it.

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