



The Emmaus Ministry for Grieving Parents Virtual Retreat Feedback Fall, 2020

- *I expected tears and pain, but was left filled with hope and grace*
- *I felt empowered to call my Catholic church and ask to return. I had stepped away for various reasons to a more progressive modern church, but upon attending this retreat, and hearing all the talks -- I felt a yearning to return. I now feel better for taking that step and look forward to going back to our church.*
- *Yes it was beautifully done, and although I missed some segments of the in-person retreat, such as the one-to-one walk, had I not been aware of those components, I wouldn't have missed them. The timing was perfect; as always, sensitively done, music beautiful, children's photos so tastefully*

done, speakers great. A wonderful experience that allowed spiritual closeness to my child and God.

- *The day brought me to where I needed to be.*
- *I hadn't been to a retreat for seven years or more. This retreat was actually more than I expected since it was virtual. I did feel the same connection with the other participants and was very moved by some of their stories.*
- *(Please make it) a little longer... I felt like the 4 hours flew by.*
- *At first I thought I might be overwhelmed. Not the case at all. It was a spiritually uplifting day for me. I felt a peace come over me. I loved the music and the whole experience.*
- *This was the fastest four hours I have ever spent!*
- *The low-key atmosphere of the virtual environment made it easier to think. There were not any distractions in the room or outside the window, because we were in the comfort of our family room.*
- *This experience was very different, but at the end, the peace and comfort are the same.*
- *I think these retreats are a wonderful way to expose parents who may be too emotionally scarred to attend in person. This is a great segue towards the deeper, longer more emotional experience that the day or weekend retreats offer.*
- *Feeling very blessed when the retreat was over; I think I didn't want it to end.*
- *I felt so human again... my insecurities around "what if only I had done this..." drifted. I felt the best I have for a while*
- *Each time I attend a retreat I find it amazing to know that I am among strangers that I have never met, but somehow I feel quite comfortable in this environment.*
- *This was an experience that fed my soul.*

- *Yes, especially (our Spiritual Leader's) reflection brought spiritual enrichment, peace and comfort to me. That our child's heart is no longer restless, because they rest in the Lord now. That our relationship with our child still exists, one where we pray for her and she prays for us - and she can be a powerful intercessor for us. That we can turn to the Blessed Mother, for she understands what it is like to lose a child. And that we will be with our child again, body/soul.*
- *I felt a certain peace come over me*
- *Trusting in God and looking at this tragedy as a blessing that my son is looking at the face of God, His angels, the Saints, Mary, and Jesus has given me the most comfort. Praying helps to take away the negative thoughts, fear and worry. God Bless you all for helping us in our time of great sorrow.*
- *Yes we both felt closer to (our daughter) and felt her presence again. We both shed a lot of tears and engaged in more conversations.*
- *Listening to (our Spiritual Leader) brought so much peace and comfort. I feel like he truly found a way to connect with each and every one of us there, no matter what the circumstance. He made me think about my faith on a new level and made connections for me that I haven't made on my own*
- *I would definitely participate in another virtual retreat if offered.*
- *Yes, being in the company of others who share your experience was very comforting and inspiring. I appreciated the excellent presentation by (our Spiritual Leader). Christianity offers hope. That has to be reinforced regularly. I plan to use the resources on the site for further contemplation.*
- *Listening and discussing loss and heaven with parents who have the same experience is a much different experience than hearing a sermon or lesson in church. This is helping me think about what I believe versus what I know*
- *Feeling my emotions instead of burying the pain will help me to heal.*
- *It was very helpful in the sense that my anger, with this retreat, has softened. I realized that, in order for my daughter to be more connected to me, I must let go of anger.*

- *(Our Spiritual Leader) is aware that parents struggle with loss of faith and it was good to hear him giving parents' permission without guilt for feeling this way.*
- *(This retreat) allowed both of us to unite together and cry. We have been supporting (our other children) and forgot each other.*
- *Extremely helpful for me. Most of the support resources we have found so far have been "God-less experiences." They are helpful and necessary to our grief journey, but the faith element is not incorporated into them. It has been something we've relied very heavily on since our daughter passed away and it was nice to be engaged in a support that was centered around our faith and the hope that it brings*
- *The 4 hours went so fast, I was sad it was over.*
- *It exceeded my expectations. I did not expect to feel as good as I did with the in-person retreat, but I did.*
- *It was honestly much better than I anticipated a virtual retreat to be.*
- *Had hesitation about a virtual format, but it was effective.*
- *The technology worked well and did not detract from the experience. The virtual retreat allowed us to participate, when we probably would not have been able to participate in an in-person program*
- *It's less isolating to be with others who have experienced the same loss as you.*
- *I have personally joined secular grief support groups in the past that are helpful, but miss the relationship we have with God and how that interfaces with your healing. So this was a welcoming experience to us*
- *Each retreat on my journey has strengthened my believe that I will see my children again.*
- *I need the support of this ministry to keep me focused. I set aside time to pray and reflect on my beautiful and not-so-beautiful memories of my son. This is a Godsend for me. It helped to get me back on track and focused on my journey.*

- *This retreat exceeded my expectations. Having it virtual allowed me to be with others around the country that normally I wouldn't have met.*
- *At first I thought might be overwhelmed. Not the case at all. It was a spiritually uplifting day for me.*
- *I'm crying but I'm so moved - you've helped change my life.*