

## **Priscilla, Coquitlam, BC**

It embarrasses me to say this, but for a long time in my life God was not special to me. I could tell people I believed in him, but He wasn't personally relevant to me, and so I didn't make Him a priority in my life. Sometimes, I was ashamed about my Catholic faith. I knew I would never not believe in God, but was that just the outcome of my upbringing? I had yet to fully understand my faith in God even though I was baptized, went to Catholic school, went to Mass and so on. This left me feeling empty, dissatisfied and unfulfilled.

After entering University, going to confession was no longer part of my regular schedule and I found myself putting it off and rationalizing my choice not to go. After about 2 years of putting it off, during the season of Lent my parish priest kept mentioning confession schedules and encouraging us to go. His persistence among a few other factors gave me the motivation to finally go. I took some time to reflect before entering the confessional. As I reflected, more and more sins kept coming to mind and I began to physically feel the weight of my sins. I finally went in, still feeling this inescapable weight of my sins--like an ugly tumor growing in my soul. After spending a long time in the confessional, I was amazed that God could still forgive me. The priest said to me, 'Even when we turn our back on God, he never turns his back on us'. When he said this I felt the weight of my sin lift off me and I could feel God's personal love for me. I realized how much I needed Him, His guidance, and His influence upon my every action. He needed to be the centre of my life. After this experience my life changed.

I have come to realize that we are never truly far from the mercy of God. This realization and my confession helped me to see how important it is to bring Jesus into every aspect of my life. God is no longer just a trivial part of my life. Through the sacrament of forgiveness and with the help of several friends along the way, I have come to witness God's intense and powerful love. I am now conscious of Him in all my decisions, conversations, and prayers and my entire perspective on life, love and the Church has changed. The feelings of emptiness, dissatisfaction and unfulfillment are no longer a part of my life; in its place are true happiness and fulfillment in my relationship with God.