



ONE PRAYER AT A TIME

Saint Brother André is noted of having said, "The door to heaven is Jesus' heart. The key to the door is prayer and love." My first visit to Saint Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal in Montréal sent me on a pilgrimage to find this key.

My pilgrimage began many years ago when I was new to Montréal. During a bus tour of the city, we made a brief stop at the Oratory, a magnificent building on a mountain. Immediately I noticed people climbing the stairs on their knees, stopping to pray on each stair!

Their humble act of faith touched my heart. At the time my sister was dying, and I didn't even know what prayers to say. But I knew that I would have to return to this place. I knew that I had to find out more about my faith and how to pray. This was the beginning of my spiritual renewal at the Oratory.

Over the years I have returned to the Oratory many times. Each time I would start at the beginning, revisit the rooms or grounds I had previously visited and find new areas to visit. Over time I slowly realized that I was ascending in my spiritual renewal, one step at a time, one prayer at a time.

During the summertime I have wandered peacefully through the beautiful gardens following the way of the Cross. I have prayed in the Chapel of Origin where Brother André lived. And I've been to Mass in the Crypt Church. However, I have spent much of my time in the Votive Chapel, contemplating the lives of the people who left all the crutches, canes and wheelchairs, and reflecting on loved ones who have departed.

Recently I spent a day of spiritual renewal at Saint Joseph's Oratory. Our day was spent at the very top of the Oratory, in the Basilica, where over 500 catechists spent a day in prayer.

We shared in Taizé prayer, liturgical dance and *lectio divina*. So much prayer, my heart was overflowed with wonder and awe. During this visit, I realized that I came to know so many prayers. I had climbed higher with one prayer at a time. I had made it to the top of the Oratory! Now I am stronger in my faith and closer to the Lord!

Each time I visit the Oratory I am filled with the wonder of this place, and I am in awe of Saint Brother André, the man who dared to dream it. With great devotion to Saint Joseph, Brother André had built a small chapel, which eventually became this great Oratory! Brother André had this place built for prayer – a place where people could become closer to the Lord one prayer at a time.

IDEAS FOR YOUR FAMILY TIME

- The *Be My Disciples* program teaches us many ways to pray. Each lesson opens and ends with prayer. Use these many opportunities to help your children learn how to pray; to pray without ceasing so they can ascend in their faith and love for the Lord.
- Saint Brother André was devoted to Saint Joseph the patron saint of Canada, of families and of fathers. As a family, learn more about Saint Joseph. Seek his help to know how to pray one step at a time.
- If you are ever in Montréal, plan to spend a day at Saint Joseph's Oratory. You can also visit via a virtual tour at www.saint-joseph.org.