

Real Life Stories
Solitary Confinement - By Robert Vogeler

Robert Vogeler, whose testimony appears below, was held prisoner by the Communists in Hungary for 17 months . . . and when finally released, his case attracted international attention.

Many times people have asked me how I was able to survive 17 months of solitary confinement in a Communist prison without cracking up mentally and physically. The answer is that it was possible only because of the power of prayer.

The tremendous thing the Communists forget and perhaps the thing that many of them do not know is that no matter how deep the dungeon, or how thick the walls, or how heavily guarded, they cannot keep Almighty God out of the prisoner's mind and heart, and they cannot keep the praise of God from the man's lips.

It was the realization of this profound truth, it was this soul-stirring knowledge that carried me safely through the horrors imposed by the Communists.

Fortunately, I was allowed to read my Bible most of the time I was in prison. I read it through twice, word for word. It was an unending source of inspiration and consolation. I found in it messages of hope and strength that in easier and more comfortable days I had passed over, as a blind man might walk over a field strewn with diamonds. But in my prison cell the Bible gave off a healing radiance that kept me tuned to the Infinite and provided me with a strong philosophical basis for developing a life of prayer.

At first I prayed rather desperately — perhaps even impatiently that God would get me out of that vile prison in a hurry. But as weeks added up to months — and as my Bible reading began to pay me spiritual dividends, I began to pray with less petulance and with more patience. I stopped trying to order God to do things for me, and instead acquired some Christian humility. Thus did the Bible and praying bring me closer to God by developing within me a greater dependence upon and faith in God.

Gradually it began to occur to me that I was more calm and confident because I had ceased trying to influence God's way to be my way, and instead prayed that my way and my will would be God's way and will.

It was here that I realized a profound truth about prayer. That is, when we pray to influence things beyond and outside ourselves, we discover that prayer has deeply influenced things within us.

I do not know what my own prayers had to do with it, but I do know that on many occasions while in prison I had the conviction that other people were praying for me.

Today, long after my release from prison, I find it easy to agree with Tennyson when he said, "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

As children we are taught, or should be taught, that prayer is a lifting up of the heart and mind to God. As we grow older we find that prayer is the soul's sincere desire. When we are faced with great trials and troubles, we use prayer as an armour to help us fight life's battles.

Finally as we grow toward spiritual maturity we find ourselves agreeing with Alex Carrel when he said that prayer is "the most powerful form of energy one can generate."

And so it was that while in a godless Communist prison, I learned to pray and to trust that God would see me safely through it all, if that should be best; and if not, nevertheless that His hand would be in mine so long as I trusted in Him.

This, as I now look back, was the invisible Light that shone into my prison cell and eventually led me out and back to my native land.

(From a personal testimony given over the air. By courtesy of "The Flame".

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