

ST GABRIEL CASE STUDY

ALICE

Alice has been in the Work for six years. She met the Work through a preschool near her home, and there a whole new horizon opened up to her. She had gone to a Catholic school run by nuns, but soon after school she stopped practicing. She married Tom, a good, level-headed fellow, who, like her, wanted to have a stable family. Soon after they had enrolled their children in the preschool, they were invited to attend a Family Education course and they were blown away by what they found: many couples that had the same desires as they did. Alice and Tom became friends with Mary and her husband James who were both in the Work. They became very good friends, time passed and they felt as though they had known each other all their lives. They began to practice their faith, and after a period of time, both Alice and Tom happily “whistled”.

Not much later they went through a very hard time economically, things were so bad that Tom had to close his small business. They had debts which worsened the situation and many years would have to pass before they could pay them all off. Mary and James realized that they were thinking of leaving the school so they suggested that they ask for a scholarship: they spoke with the management team of the school and came to an agreement so that they could continue there.

They have three children. Alice works in an office with a fairly low salary. They need to pay their mortgage and the business debts. Tom was theoretically unemployed but as he knows how to do repairs, he ends up earning a couple of thousand dollars a month. He receives cash in hand so as not to lose unemployment benefits. He also does a lot at home, the majority, as Alice is unable to.

Alice is happy in the Work, she feels welcomed and understood in the Centre. Her Coordinator is very good. If Tom has work, Alice takes her three kids to the Circle and someone will always look after them. She can only go to Mass on Sundays, due to her start time at work and in the evening she is with her children. She doesn't have a car and does her prayer in the train. She also prays the Rosary, but has never picked up the habit of the reading. She goes to the Circle, but does not go to the Annual Course or retreat as she can't permit herself the luxury of spending the money. Nor does she give her contribution, as she does not have the money.

Lately, she is also concerned about having another child, as she does not want to lose her job, or pay another set of school fees, even if it's not that much. Her mother was very upset when she was expecting their third child and doesn't understand why she joined the Work, she can't tell her anything about Circles, the need to go to her Annual Course nor anything related to the Work as she doesn't understand and gets angry.

