

# **Raquel, Spain: "The lama told me to go to Mass every day"**

Raquel Escudier, a mother of two from San Fernando (Spain), sought peace and balance. Her life took a dramatic turn when a Buddhist lama told her she needed to go to Mass every day.

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Raquel Escudier is from San Fernando (Cádiz, Spain). She is married and has two children. Her life took a dramatic turn the day a

lama (a Buddhist spiritual master) told her she needed to go to Mass every day...

Raquel felt that he had misunderstood her story, which began when she was a reluctant student with poor grades. Concerned, her parents decided to send her to a boarding school, where she re-took the six classes she had previously failed. Her parents decided that a new school would help her keep her grades up, and they sent her to Grazalema.

## **Four years of Buddhism**

But she had been warned: "Be careful; it's an Opus Dei school." Raquel spent the rest of her time in school "avoiding anything related to Opus Dei."

There she met her future husband, and some time later they married and had two children. She was happy

but, in her own words, "restless," and she accepted a friend's invitation to yoga classes, hoping to find balance and peace.

Raquel enjoyed yoga, and the instructor introduced her to Buddhism. She started meditating and attending sessions with lamas.

"For a time, I was very happy," Raquel says, remembering the four years she spent as a Buddhist. "I felt balanced, and everything seemed to flow smoothly."

Suddenly, however, her feeling of peace disappeared, and her previous restlessness returned in full force.

## **Yoga and Mass, but no feelings**

Raquel began to feel like someone — some presence — was standing in front of her, holding out a hand. She was uneasy and talked to a lama about it, also telling him that she was

non-practicing but considered herself a Catholic.

The lama's response surprised her: "You need to go to Mass." Raquel tried to explain that she had found peace in Buddhism, but he was insistent: "You have to go to Mass every day."

Raquel began to go to Mass every day, slipping into the very last pew in the church. She also continued practicing yoga, and she was extremely confused. "The lama didn't understand me, and the 'man on the Cross' didn't understand me either. I was always hoping to feel something because the whole point of Buddhism is to feel."

### **Another surprising suggestion**

Around that time, her daughter began taking catechism classes to prepare for her First Communion, and before the girl made her first

confession, her parents went to the sacrament. Raquel told the priest that she was in confession because she thought it was the right thing to do, but that she was a Buddhist.

Gently, the priest invited her to share her story with him. At the end of it, he asked: "Has it ever occurred to you that this might come from God?"

Raquel continued going to Mass without understanding it, but eventually, she began to lower her guard. "That's when I realized who was holding out that hand to me... It was Christ. He wanted me to follow him, and I resisted."

Raquel started learning about the faith through the formation her daughter was receiving. "I had avoided this thing so much, and then suddenly it seemed to be my vocation."

Her husband has been by her side through the entire journey. Raquel

now lives her vocation as a supernumerary of Opus Dei and says that everything has come out right.

"The most beautiful thing for me is to think that was Him who came to me," she says.

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