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“I need spiritual training”

Vicky Balfour is 19. She plays hockey at a club where she also coaches a girls' team. She tells us how hockey training has helped her in her relationship with God.

12/02/2010

Ever since childhood I have been hooked on all kinds of sports. I enjoyed everything, running around, doing all sorts of things; I could not keep still. That was why I started playing hockey at Club Pueyrredón.

It was an entertaining game. I had fun and I went to have a good time with my friends. But when I felt lazy, I did not go. Playing hockey at the club meant two training sessions a week and a match on Saturdays. When I was young, I did not give much importance to the training sessions. I was a bit lazy, I wasn't committed.

But if you start to love a sport, you become more enthusiastic and you simply become more committed. You need to put in more effort to get better. That is why training is the key: if you don't train, you don't perform, you don't improve.

I have the same experience in my relationship with God. In the beginning, it did not occur to me to think that I could apply the same method to improve my spiritual life. But now I see that something very similar is happening and without my

realizing it, one thing is indirectly helping me with the other.

I changed school when I was 14 and I started 9th grade in a new school. I made some very good friends who invited me to some social outreach camps. My mother also encouraged me to go. I went to two and had a great time with my friends. I helped people in need, I learned many things about the Christian life, but that was all there was to it.

At the first camp, Clara, a numerary member of Opus Dei, invited me to go to Montes Grandes, a center for girls in San Isidro. I told her I could not go because it was far from my home. I refused again during the second camp and I told her more or less the same thing. A year later, Agus, a very good friend from school suggested that I go to Montes to see if I would like it and without knowing why, this time I agreed.

Of course I loved it. I enjoyed it very much and I had a good time with my friends, and incidentally (for that was what happened), I was receiving spiritual training. Of course, at that time, I didn't give much importance to it. I went to Montes because I enjoyed being with my friends. Little by little, it became my second home...

But what exactly happened? I was growing up and I started to realize the importance of the human formation and Christian training, of how important it was for my life and how important it was to put it into practice. That was one of the great lessons that I learned and am still learning from Montes: to put into practice the formation that I receive and to make it part of my life. I began to realize that it is not just theory but that what I heard was meant to be lived.

In conclusion, I needed ‘spiritual training’ for the interior life. In the same way that I became more responsible and took hockey training seriously as part of my commitment to my team so that we played better each Saturday, I too became more responsible about my spiritual life. And all this happened without my realizing it; the same thing was happening in my life as in hockey. In Montes I discovered the sacrament of Confession, the importance of spending some time in prayer every day, of going to Mass, of studying more conscientiously... I understood that these are the means to really live my life each day as a Christian
