

# THE GIFT OF SILENCE.



**T**oday's technology enables us to be in constant communication with each other at all times. The capacity for receiving messages is immeasurable, and because they arrive in only a few seconds, the senders usually expect immediate answers. **We are becoming accustomed to living at an extremely fast pace.**

I have great admiration for those who have the discipline to take a daily – or at least a weekly – brake from this barrage of information and the mental havoc it produces.

Every year, Mari Carmen and I participate in an experience that is known as a silent retreat. We spend five days at the Abbey of Lérins, a Cistercian monastery on the island of Saint-Honorat, in Lérins. It is not a vacation; it is merely a period of reflection.

The gift of silence allows us to concentrate on such important issues as, for example, "In what direction are our lives headed? Where are we going? Is that where we want to be? What adjustments must we make?"

Completely disconnected from the Internet, e-mails and every other distraction, we obtain the peace and perspective required in order to appreciate the most priceless gifts in our lives, such as our health and our close relationships. As a result, I have resolved to spend more time with each of my grandchildren and get to know them as much as possible.

My work continues to be my great passion. To serve as a "bridge" putting people in contact with others is part of my essence. However, I can delegate many of my activities, except my roles as a husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend. That is why am determined to remain in these roles 100 percent.

**Life is full of opportunities, which sometimes I can appreciate much more when I am "far from the madding crowd".**



"Ora et labora"  
( Pray and work ) motto  
of the Cistercian monks .

