

Roland West, Loner

Discussion Questions

1. We know that God is everywhere and that we are surrounded by the saints, the cloud of witnesses mentioned in Hebrews 12:1. But almost everyone feels lonely at times. Have you ever felt lonely even around others? Do you think that God allows us to experience this feeling so that we might turn to Him?
2. Before his death, Saint Dominic said, "Do not weep, for I shall be more useful to you after my death and I shall help you then more effectively than during my life." And Saint Therese of Lisieux said, "I want to spend my heaven in doing good on earth." Have you given much thought to the Communion of Saints? What saints have you turned to for prayers in your time of need? How have they helped you?
3. Autism refers to a group of complex neurodevelopment disorders characterized by repetitive behaviors and difficulty with communication and social interaction. The number of people diagnosed with autism seems to be increasing. Do you have a sibling or know someone with autism? What challenges do you see in having a sibling or classmate with autism?
4. We profess that God can do all things, but God does not always answer our prayers in the way we want. Do you know anyone who God has physically healed as a result of prayer? Why do you think God does not heal everyone who asks?
5. Roland could have told on his older brother a number of times. Fear may have kept him from telling in the beginning, but what kept him from telling in the end? Do you think he was right to cover his brother's sin with a mantle of charity? Had his father known more, he could have spoken with him or disciplined him. Can mercy and forgiveness have a stronger effect on a person?
6. Each member of Roland's family was affected differently by his mother's death. Roland had a strong connection with his mother, and her death hit him hard, making him feel alone in the world. Roland's father seemed to pull away from God and distance himself from his boys. Jarret grew cold and controlling as a way of handling the pain. Is there a right or wrong way to handle the death of a loved one? What are your experiences with this?
7. There are several themes in this story. What message do you take away from it?