NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://www.ncronline.org)

British TV show follows silent journey of five people

Isabella R. Moyer | Feb. 8, 2013 NCR Today

I'm doing nothing for Lent! Actually, I'm going to try and find some small moments of silence in my day. My inspiration comes from a British TV show, originally broadcast in 2010 on BBC 2, called "The Big Silence [1]." It's a reality show like no other. Five very diverse people are invited to leave their hectic lives behind and enter into intentional silence. The first experience is a weekend in a Benedictine community in Worth Abbey, after which they are invited to seek some silent time in their day-to-day lives. The biggest challenge follows: eight days of silence in a Jesuit retreat center in North Wales.

Here is the introduction to the series:

> Many of the world's religions believe that there is one simple path that leads us to God. This same path takes us to the very center of who we are. It has been at the core of the Catholic mystical tradition for centuries. But, outside of religious settings it has all but disappeared. It's called SILENCE.

We all know that trying to enter into silence is far from "doing nothing." The five volunteers struggle to let go of cellphones and the Internet. The initial hours and days are torture to some and bring out anger in others. Frustrations and fears are shared in clandestine conversations in hallways and on scenic country paths.

Benedictine Fr. Christopher Jamison of Worth Abbey describes silence as "a gateway to the soul, and the soul is the gateway to God." We fear silence, allowing noise and busyness to act as a barrier and an escape. If we have the courage to enter into the silence, we will eventually "bump into our deepest self." And entering into our deepest self brings us face-to-face with our hurts and our weaknesses.

While silence as a discipline crosses denominational, religious and cultural bounds, it is fascinating to watch these five people voluntarily enter into two very Catholic settings, a Benedictine monastery and a Jesuit retreat center. Conversion to a specific belief is not the purpose of the quest. The purpose is to enter into silence. In the process, God may or may not be found.

This is what the new evangelization calls us to do, to offer opportunities for today's women and men to make room for soul-work in their lives; to make room for God. And one path, it seems, can be as simple as seeking silence.

The three-hour series is available on YouTube. A companion website, Growing into Silence [2], provides many resources for the journey.

Source URL (retrieved on *2016-05-29 08:47*): http://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/british-tv-show-follows-silent-journey-five-people

Links:

[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_zDtdYu3mA
[2] http://growingintosilence.com/index.html