

Cecil's interview

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2 **Interviewer:** Cecil, what do you believe about God?

3 **Cecil:** What do I believe about God? Well, (*long pause*) I think he sits
4 up there and watches over us an' helps us out and – um – we
5 can talk to him whenever we want and he does answer our
6 prayers even if not directly. Um – (*long pause*) That's all I can
7 think of.

8 **Interviewer:** Okay. Have you always thought about God in this way?

9 **Cecil:** No. No. Ever since – um – probably since the retreat that I
10 actually noticed that I could pray to him and he'd answer me.

11 **Interviewer:** Your Year 12 retreat?

12 **Cecil:** Yep. Jus' towards the start of the year.

13 **Interviewer:** Was there anything about the retreat that you would attribute
14 that to?

15 **Cecil:** Um – I think it was – well, the whole retreat put the idea in my
16 head but there was one session when – um – people would get
17 up and say – like in front of everyone – how they – where they
18 see God in their lives. An' they go through everything for some
19 – . One girl who was saying she lost seven close people – um –
20 to cancer in one year – an' she wouldn't have been able to get
21 through it without praying. And then it kind of clicked after the
22 retreat that I could do that too.

23 **Interviewer:** Okay. I think we'll come back to that. There's a second
24 interview, so it might come up there. If it doesn't then I'll bring
25 you back to it in the third interview. Okay, is Jesus different from
26 God?

27 **Cecil:** (*long pause*) I've already thought about this a bit and I thought
28 Jesus was just God but in human form. But I haven't really
29 thought about it that much.

30 **Interviewer:** Do you think there was a time when you saw no difference?

31 **Cecil:** Between the two?

32 **Interviewer:** Mmm.

33 **Cecil:** Yeah. I think so.

34 **Interviewer:** Can you think back to when that might have been?

35 **Cecil:** I think it was discussion in RE. We were just talking about – um
36 – I think it just came up in discussion.

37 **Interviewer:** Was that in Year 12?

38 **Cecil:** Yeah, it would have been Year 12.

39 **Interviewer:** Okay. What about the Holy Spirit?

40 **Cecil:** I've never really thought about the Holy Spirit.

- 41 **Interviewer:** Okay. If I asked the question: How would you explain the Holy
42 Spirit to a friend who doesn't believe in God?
- 43 **Cecil:** I don't think I could do that.
- 44 **Interviewer:** That's fine. That's not a problem. Now, a set of questions: Do
45 you pray? To whom do you pray? How often do you pray? How
46 do you pray?
- 47 **Cecil:** I do pray. And I have often – um – I pray every single – after
48 Mass, during Communion – I pray then. And also I try to every
49 night. And I decided that around exam time because that's – I
50 knew that I could ask for help. Then I had a feeling that
51 someone could help me but I wasn't too sure. And how do I
52 pray? Um – first, I thank God just for various things and then I
53 ask him to watch over my friends and after that and then myself
54 and family and anyone whose – um – going through a tough
55 time, sick, and pray for friends as well.
- 56 **Interviewer:** Okay. You mention there that you ask God. So is it God you
57 pray to?
- 58 **Cecil:** Yes.
- 59 **Interviewer:** What about Jesus?
- 60 **Cecil:** No. I – I think – I believe I pray – prayed to Mary for a bit –
61 'cause I remember my Year 10 RE teacher told me that (*stops to*
62 *put the cat outside*) My – um – Year 10 RE teacher – we did like
63 a little prayer session towards the end of class and he said that
64 anytime you pray to Mary it's almost like y – you're talking to
65 your parents because sometimes you ask something to your
66 Dad and he won't listen so you go to your Mum, so that kinda
67 clicks. I've done that once or twice And also usually I start off
68 my prayers (*the cat distracts him again*) usually I start off my
69 prayers by asking how – um – how God's going. And usually
70 the first thing that pops into my head's okay most of the time.
- 71 **Interviewer:** Good. Is there anything else you wanted to add about the
72 areas: about how you see God? Jesus? Holy Spirit? and
73 prayer? Anything popped into your mind?
- 74 **Cecil:** Well, I been thinking about how I see – see God an' I th– got
75 one little thing I kinda – I believe I'm startin' to see in everyone.
76 For me personally, I see him just how – um – that that they –
77 that everyone does good. That's how I believe I do anyway at
78 the moment.
- 79 **Interviewer:** Let's move on. How does your belief in God influence or shape
80 the way you live your life?
- 81 **Cecil:** (*long pause*) I guess, I'm just taking a guess, but – um –
82 because I have asked him for quite a few things like in the la–
83 past few years 'cause I've gone though a bit of tough times and
84 (*pause*) that's influenced my life by me asking him 'cause after

- 85 I've asked him I've tried a bit harder 'cause I can't, and then I
86 can do it even though – even if it takes a while and (*long pause*)
- 87 **Interviewer:** I'll use some sub-questions; that might help. What impact has
88 your faith had on your attitude towards suffering?
- 89 **Cecil:** Towards suffering – not that much because nothing's really
90 happened to me like last year, but at the moment this year,
91 Mum's got a friend who's got – um – a brain tumour. She's not
92 doing very well. It's getting worse. And we've got a few friends
93 – another friend's got cancer. And we also found out last night –
94 do you remember Sarah Mullins from the Conference?
- 95 **Interviewer:** Yes.
- 96 **Cecil:** She might have cancer.
- 97 **Interviewer:** Oh.
- 98 **Cecil:** She's hav– she's going – she's like a few tests so like in the
99 past, maybe like the end of last year so this year there's
100 happened to nobody I've thought about that much.
- 101 **Interviewer:** What about your attitude towards death?
- 102 **Cecil:** Towards death – well I have noticed before that I always – I'm
103 believing now that you go up there – you go up with God when
104 you die 'cause – um – again when I pray, especially at Church,
105 I'll say "Hi" to my Nan 'cause she passed away quite a while
106 ago. Stuff like that. So I reckon – yeah, but – um – I haven't
107 really thought about that as well. That's about it.
- 108 **Interviewer:** In what ways does your faith help to give your life a sense of
109 purpose and meaning?
- 110 **Cecil:** (*long pause*) Is there any other questions?
- 111 **Interviewer:** (*both laugh*) We can come back to it. And sometimes with these
112 questions, they are things that you really haven't thought about
113 before – and that's not uncommon. Everyone I have interviewed
114 has found the question challenging because a lot of the time
115 they don't stop and think about it. But they go away and think
116 about it and we usually come back to it in the second or third
117 interview. So let's move on. What we do in this part is look at
118 events in your life that you think have led to changes in your
119 relationship with God. You have already mentioned the retreat.
120 You mentioned a Year 10 class and something about prayer.
121 Just stop and think for a moment about what people have said
122 or done that has contributed to your relationship with God or not
123 contributed to it.
- 124 **Cecil:** (*long pause*) Oh, I do – I do remember one incident. There's a
125 few, but there's one. It was at school, Teresa Day and we were
126 – um – at lunchtime – after lunch, Teresa Day, you go down the
127 oval and there's a teachers versus students soccer match. And
128 we were watching and just mucking around playing kicking the
129 ball and then I was – this is last year, it was Year 12, an' we

130 were kicking the ball and it went – someone kicked it too far and
 131 it went away a bit and then some Year 11s picked it up and
 132 started chucking it around and wouldn't give it to us an' I thought
 133 that was – just stupid. So I can't believe they actually did that. It
 134 was the sort of thing you see in the movies, or something. And
 135 that kinda – even though – yeah, basically what they did kinda –
 136 they challenged my faith 'cause I didn't think anyone was that
 137 stupid. That was a few days and then it went away. That was
 138 one thing. Was there anything else? Again the retreat I think,
 139 especially that session when everyone got up and said an' how
 140 they see God. That was pretty strong.

141 **Interviewer:** Was that session during the day or at night?

142 **Cecil:** Um – well, it was in the afternoon, I think. An' everyone just sat
 143 in a room an' – there was a chair in the middle at the front.
 144 They jus' got up and said what they wanted to. (*long pause*) Um.
 145 (*long pause*) And I also think – um – well, Talitha's made me
 146 start going back – going back into Church and she's – um –
 147 even though she's – I don't think she knows she's such a – y'
 148 know a light of my faith. She's good. (*pause*) That's why I like
 149 the stories an' stuff she tells me an' (*pause*) stuff like that. That
 150 helps a lot. (*pause*) Um – Y' know, she go' – she started me
 151 going – started me – um – going back to Church an' then I was
 152 having trouble concentrating in Church an' she told me to try and
 153 leave all my thoughts and worries at the door an' so I did an' that
 154 helped out quite a bit. And it's getting better.

155 **Interviewer:** Good. Shall we move on?

156 **Cecil:** Yeah.

157 **Interviewer:** Okay. Has your faith grown stronger or weaker in the last twelve
 158 months?

159 **Cecil:** In the last twelve months? It's grown stronger.

160 **Interviewer:** Okay. I think everything you've been saying indicates in some
 161 ways why: the influence of Talitha helping you, obviously a
 162 powerful retreat experience, and some good experiences at
 163 school, too, and then also the impact of other people's suffering
 164 on you. So I suppose the sort of question I would want to ask
 165 has already been answered. I'd like, if you can, to broaden it out
 166 and to think of the broader context: the impact of your school on
 167 your faith and not just the retreat, but the school as a whole.

168 **Cecil:** (*long pause*) I don't know. I don't think it's actually done that
 169 much. Like RE was good but because in Year 11, 12 the main
 170 emphasis – emphasis is supposed to be focused on discussion,
 171 but with the classes I was in they weren't really the discussion
 172 type, so we really didn't do much about that. But (*pause*) with
 173 the assignments, I can't remember what they were about, like
 174 vocation and the beatitude, I think, they kinda helped out a bit,
 175 but (*long pause*) I don't think that much.

- 176 **Interviewer:** Okay. When you said assignments on vocation and beatitude
177 helped out a bit, are you able to identify just in what way they
178 helped?
- 179 **Cecil:** Just by understanding like what vocation means an' stuff like
180 that – an' that – an' what the beatitudes mean an' why they do it
181 an' what happens if you follow them, an' stuff like that.
- 182 **Interviewer:** Apart from the retreat experience and the other experiences
183 you've named, have there been any other experiences in your
184 school life, or have there been any significant people in your
185 school life who've led to changes in the way you think about and
186 relate to God?
- 187 **Cecil:** (*long pause*) Maybe my Year 10 RE teacher. Al– even though it
188 wasn't that much. He used to help out with that stuff (*pause*) and
189 – I guess – 'cause I can't really think – I can't really think about
190 the years, but – um – I guess probably all my RE teachers
191 helped out with that stuff.
- 192 **Interviewer:** You mentioned your Year 10 RE teacher. Can you identify
193 specifically what it was?
- 194 **Cecil:** Oh yeah, that's the one – the one – the one thing I can
195 remember is him saying that sometimes your faith pray to Mary
196 or pray to God. That's the one thing I remember. And he was a
197 good RE teacher.
- 198 **Interviewer:** What made him a good RE teacher?
- 199 **Cecil:** Um – um – he was, he was – um – he was funny without trying
200 to be funny, but wasn't too m– wasn't too funny. And – um – he
201 would just discuss the stuff really well. I used to enjoy being in
202 his class.
- 203 **Interviewer:** Why would being funny be important?
- 204 **Cecil:** Um – so that you're not just looking at the Bible every day an'
205 doing work, doing worksheets. Instead, you're actually enjoying.
- 206 **Interviewer:** Is it any different in any other subject?
- 207 **Cecil:** (*pause*) They – they're pretty similar actually.
- 208 **Interviewer:** So, did he teach anything else?
- 209 **Cecil:** Oh, he taught – um – I had him for Maths as well.
- 210 **Interviewer:** So was he the same in Maths as he was in RE?
- 211 **Cecil:** Yeah, pretty much when I think about it.
- 212 **Interviewer:** So, a good teacher?
- 213 **Cecil:** Yeah. And I also had him last year for Calculus as well.
- 214 **Interviewer:** Okay. What about the place of prayer and liturgy in your
215 relationship with God? You mentioned how you go to Mass in
216 the parish and Talitha's helped you there. Is there anything
217 specific about prayer and liturgy at school?

- 218 **Cecil:** (*long pause*) The only thing I can really think of is how different
219 the Masses were 'cause the school – the school Mass – oh, not
220 – not all of the school Masses, but the important ones, they were
221 engaging.
- 222 **Interviewer:** In what way were they engaging?
- 223 **Cecil:** Well, just the – the only thing I can think of is the music. The
224 music and songs were really good, but (*pause*) that's hard to
225 answer that question.
- 226 **Interviewer:** Let's move on. What people have played a significant part in
227 your faith development?
- 228 **Cecil:** People? Um – I'd have to say my Mum and (*long pause*) Mum
229 and Talitha. (*long pause*)
- 230 **Interviewer:** Is there anything your Mum has said or done that's helped you
231 grow in faith?
- 232 **Cecil:** Um, I think – I know she did – I can't remember exactly what she
233 said. I know she did say stuff when Nan passed away and that's
234 probably stuck with me and just – how she raised me as well for
235 an – um – being a Catholic, but now that you mention that, but –
236 um – Joan as well has also done a lot, especially reviews an'
237 stuff like that.
- 238 **Interviewer:** What about the difference in the influence between your Mum
239 and your Dad?
- 240 **Cecil:** Oh, 'cause my parents are divorced, or separated, when I was
241 eighteen months old, and Dad – I see Dad maybe – I saw Dad
242 so – between then and now – I saw Dad probably once or twice
243 a year. And then a while back we had a holiday at his – at his
244 house. And now last year an' this year, he's in Perth,
245 somewhere down Claremont, and' we go over there on various
246 weekends, have dinner an' stuff. But he hasn't really had a big –
247 and also he doesn't – I think he is Catholic, but he doesn't
248 practise it.
- 249 **Interviewer:** So your Mum is by far the major influence?
- 250 **Cecil:** Yeah. An' I can remember one time – um – Terri had her
251 (*pause*) Conf–, not Confirm– Is there a Confirmation or
252 Graduation Mass from primary school?
- 253 **Interviewer:** Yes.
- 254 **Cecil:** An' we were at – and when at the Mass and Dad came, I can
255 remember Dad saying he didn't like it and it was boring an' he
256 won't – that kind of stuff – 'cause he shouldn't have been saying
257 that, but that's just – because he wasn't a Catholic, but I'm a
258 Catholic.
- 259 **Interviewer:** Okay, any other stories that identify how your Mum's influenced
260 you?

- 261 **Cecil:** (*very long pause*) I can't remember any more stories, but I can
262 remember – um – like when we go to Mass and there was –
263 there was – if there was something wrong with Nan, or she was
264 sick, or if I was doing my exams, or someone we knew was
265 going through a hard time and we'd light a candle at Mass, that
266 kind of stuff.
- 267 **Interviewer:** Was that important to you?
- 268 **Cecil:** Oh, before – I must admit when I was younger I didn't really see
269 the point in doing it, but then after I kinda realised that he does –
270 God does do stuff that kinda – yeah.
- 271 **Interviewer:** So what do you link the light of the candle with?
- 272 **Cecil:** Um – I don't really know how long they stay on for. (*pause*)
- 273 **Interviewer:** Most Churches let them burn down, so they stay alight for as
274 long as they can.
- 275 **Cecil:** I've never thought about it before. (*long pause*) I guess when I
276 walk past the candles, I kinda notice that there's been a lot
277 of people gone 'cause usually there's quite a few there. I've
278 never thought about that before.
- 279 **Interviewer:** Okay. Thanks, Cecil.