

Goodbye for now, Facebook

By [Martha-Lynn Corner](#)

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Facebook, I wish I could quit you.

I might need to ditch you all together.

You see, when things are uncertain, or when I'm feeling sad, or when I'm doing the good, hard work I'm meant to do but feel exhausted and depleted and occasionally despairing, I turn to you.

Not to God. Not to a flesh and blood friend, in the same room. Not to my children,.
Not to my husband.

And the relief you provide? It's the vapid, langorous, time-obliterating relief of distraction, which serves to solve exactly nothing, improves my human relationships exactly none at all, is detrimental to my relationship to God, and—though I've worked very, very hard to be present to my children during the hours they're awake—has been creeping in around the corners of playtime, story time, running in the park time.

Here— read this:

Desert Father John Cassian, depicted the apathetic restlessness of acedia, "the noonday demon", in the coenobitic monk:

He looks about anxiously this way and that, and sighs that none of the brethren come to see him, and often goes in and out of his cell, and frequently gazes up at the sun, as if it was too slow in setting, and so a kind of unreasonable confusion of mind takes possession of him like some foul darkness.

--John Cassian, from *The Institutes*

And though I haven't the London Foggiest notion what "coenobitic" might mean, do you know what I'm reading there? Do you know when my own state of mind matches this monk's the most? Do you know when I find myself pacing in my own personal

cell of agitation, self-pity, and pointless distraction?

It's when, over and over throughout the day, I'm checking you, Facebook.

But I'm an introvert, part of me whines. This is the perfect way for me to get some social interaction into my busy life.

Bullshit. Social media has proven to be way more antisocial than healthily social for me.

But my friends are so widespread, I whine. How else will I know what's going on with them?

Bullshit. I can pick up the phone. I can send an e-mail. Either of those ways of reaching out is more personal and authentic than just "liking" a status update—yes, even the e-mail, which is about as antiquated as letter-writing for my text-dependent generation.

Listen—I get that plenty of people don't have any issues with you. That don't log in when they know they should be doing something else, who manage to flit in and out a few times a week for a few minutes at a time, who manage always to floss and choose green vegetables and look both ways twice before crossing the street.

I'm just not one of those people.

So as I arrange to make a silent retreat this Friday, and deal with some of the monsters whose chain rattling has led me to spend far more time with you than I should, I'm going to unplug for a while.

In an earlier version of this blog post, Facebook, I said I'd be doing that "for a very long time. The longest ever. It might be forever, if I have the strength."

I also said that to do that, I would need an enormous helping of Divine aid and grace, towards which I would point myself like an arrow, palms sweaty, fingers crossed.

And that is absolutely true.

But then, irony of ironies-- I shared these plans (drumroll please) on Facebook, and some of the most real and newest friends I have there convinced me not to deep-six my whole account.

I've discovered this weird little pocket there of people with whom the interactions are more real, because we talk about God, and we meet in real life, meaning we've kind of subverted the typical click-and-scroll Facebook paradigm.

I'm realistic, though. With a few exceptions, that group is a total anomaly.

I can't be on Facebook right now because I deserve better. My friends deserve better. My children deserve better.

God deserves better.

Hell, even the monsters rattling their chains deserve better, because underneath they're not monsters at all, but leftover bits of unresolved difficulties that long to be brought out into the light and remolded into something beautiful....Something beautiful and organic and true, with a beating heart and best intentions and a face turned up and out and not towards a computer screen.

Still, I wonder if earlier, I wasn't missing part of the equation: that maybe I could ask these friends to wait and pray as I toddle my metaphorical way straight into the heart of Mt. Doom. After all, didn't Frodo go in there with Sam?

Even Jesus had a posse, right? And while I 100 percent maintain that he would NOT be on Facebook if he were alive today and would be *pissed* about the ways we've exchanged true human interaction for the click-and-scroll, sometimes I wonder if he might not have had a Twitter account. "Verily, verily I say until you" is only 23 characters.

I need some space from you, Facebook. But maybe not before I steal a few gems off my friends list and enlist their companionship in real time.

Goodbye for now.

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