

“My Mother, My Confidence”

A Memoir by Sister Maria



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I'd have to go back to my childhood. As a child, we were brought up in the Catholic faith; we went to Catholic schools. But I think the inspiration was my mother and father. They had God within them. My father spent a half hour to an hour on his prayers at night. They were used to saying the Rosary, so that brought us all together. I guess you always knew that God was with us and, you know, very special. We prayed a lot when things went wrong. My mother would always say, "Pray about it." I think we just knew that God was with us, and God was always our Savior and our Redeemer. Going to Catholic schools, we lived God more or less. As a high-school kid, just like ordinary high-school kids, we went to dances and we had fun and did all the good things and had lots of friends. Our cousins' club all went to Catholic school too, and we were very happy growing up.

I think when Paul went away to become a priest, I really prayed and tried to do good things in order to show God that I was really trying to be on His side. It just seemed like God was right with us. I noticed when I'd be out at a dance or something, inside of me I used to say, I don't belong here; this isn't my life, but what can I do? That's where the vocation came through. Then when I was working, I'd look out at the atmosphere out there—we worked in a poor neighborhood—and think, oh gosh, all these poor people working, and what am I doing? I'm not doing anything for the poor. So a vocation was working within me, I'm sure. There are so many things that pointed out that I should become a Sister. I did have a very good friend that I went out with, and we had fun. He was a friend of my brother's. My poor mother was afraid that he didn't know I had a vocation, and maybe it wasn't good for me to be going out with him. When my mother told him that I was going to be a Sister, we went out to the car, and he said, "Oh, you're going to the convent, huh?" I said, "Yes." He said, "We'll have to do some good things before you go." That was the end of it. We contacted a Sister who would speak for me to the community. The Sister was telling me all the things I had to do to get ready, and it was possible that I was able to go. Of course when you go, you're lonesome for home. Being in the convent, you are naturally lonesome. You can't give that up, but it worked out well.

All the time I felt that God was with me during my teaching. When little kids would fall down or something, I'd think, "Oh God, don't let anything happen to them." I'd be so worried that in my charge somebody would get hurt, but no one ever did. I have this favorite aspiration to Mary, my Mother, my Confidence. It came automatic, and I used to say, "my Mother, my Confidence, please help me." With the Holy Spirit, the Blessed Mother and God, it was okay. I really enjoyed life, and I loved being a nun. I was really happy that God had chosen me to be a Sister.

Now, my relationship with Him is very close. I really treasure the mass and the fact that we can receive communion every day. I feel that He's really directing us all the time and letting me live in this wonderful place. It really is a wonderful place, this Wright Hall. We love it dearly. The Sisters are so loving and so beautiful. Of course, I think God has been very good to me in my old age, but there are a few things that I keep praying for—like help me to be a better person, to be patient and kind to everybody.

There was never a time when I didn't feel God's presence. Although one time, when Sisters were leaving because they wanted the world rather than the religious life, one priest said to me, "How come you're not leaving? How come you're still staying?" I said, "I had a hard time

making up my mind to come, so I'm not giving it up." You have to suffer for something, then you have it, and it's yours. That's what I feel is so wonderful.

Young women today should pray that God will tell them what they are to do, whether it's marry or be religious. I think you have to pray to God in order to specialize what you feel you need to do, you know. Like some kids already know what they want when they go to college; they want to be a doctor or lawyer or something. Well, that's a vocation, and you've got to think, is that really what God wants me to do? Will I be okay in that profession? If not, instruct me. What can I do? And He will. He's your father, you know. It's wonderful. I really feel the power of God is with us all the time, and we don't realize it. He gives us thinking power, and that helps. Also, seek out people who are like you are—people who have joined the convent or priesthood if they're aiming to be religious. I feel sorry that so many of our Catholic schools have closed, because I do think our Sisters have a big influence on boys becoming priests and girls becoming Sisters. They saw in them happiness, contentment, and love of God. Maybe God wants something else to be done. Maybe He's giving those kids stronger powers than we had.