

# **A Ray of Light in the Darkness**

## **Testimony of Two Souls**

### **First Testimony**

More than a year ago we used to attend a prayer group held every two weeks. The group was small in number; not more than twenty persons. We would participate in Mass, and the priest would explain in detail the holy readings. I used to enjoy it. The priest's insights into the Holy Scripture and other topics we discussed used to fascinate me. It was a unique learning experience. Sometimes I wish I had recorded those sessions to listen to them over and over again! Unfortunately, the meetings came to an end. We tried to find something similar, but to no avail.

The first MIR meeting I attended was the one held in Msida last winter. I found that the MIR meetings were the opposite of what I expected. I wanted a small discussion group. Instead I found myself squashed amongst a crowd of people glaring at me, reciting the rosary, then singing and praying the same lines over and over again. I didn't feel part of the crowd. I could not get into the mood of the ceremony. All this made me feel angry and annoyed.

We left towards the end of the adoration. My wife noticed that I was angry and upset and asked me what was wrong. I told her how I felt about the whole MIR meeting, and that I was not going to attend a second time. My wife did not feel the same way I did, but since she felt that we should grow spiritually together as a family, the search went on!

It was long after we made our acquaintance with the Caruana family and Fr. Hayden that I realised my selfishness. It finally occurred to me that just because I did not enjoy myself or learn anything from these MIR meetings, doesn't mean I should not go! I argued that surely Jesus and Mary enjoy the prayers and adoration from all those people gathered under one roof! All I was concerned with was receiving not giving. I decided to go for Jesus and Mary because they want us to go and are pleased with our presence.

We attended the MIR meetings held at Ta' Pinu, St. Julians, and Tarxien. We nearly missed the last meeting. My wife was quite sick and I was feeling lethargic and in no mood of attending a prayer meeting. The children were asleep and the MIR was going to start within 45 minutes. I knew that even if we left now, we would have to stand up for nearly 3 hours with a one-year old baby and a toddler. I thought that it would not be my fault if we missed it as we'll go next time – Our Lady will understand (rationalisation!). All of a sudden my wife sat up in bed and declared that we had to go immediately! Although physically weak, she was the stronger person. I felt ashamed for convincing myself not to go! We prayed to God to give us strength and hurriedly dressed-up the kids and prepared to leave. It was the right thing to do.

In fact, during this last meeting I had an experience which I never went through before. As I was approaching Fr. Hayden and Fr. David to receive Holy Communion, I thought to myself how glorious this moment was. I felt happy. I suddenly felt as if

God was inviting me and that he forgave me for all the wrongdoings in my life. I could approach him without fear and with open hands. I felt like crying, and in fact I could not hold the tears from flowing. I received Jesus and walked towards the back of the church, with tears still in my eyes. I hugged my son, whom I was holding in my arms, strongly. I am not an emotional person, and I do not get carried away by mass hysteria. I cannot explain it. I can only describe what happened and what I felt.

## **Second Testimony**

I confess that I was never a particularly spiritually inclined person. In her autobiography, St. Teresa of Avila describes herself at a point in her life as ‘wicked’. Within such perspective, I would undoubtedly win an Oscar for being one of the ‘wickedest’ beings on the surface on the earth. In spite of my shortcomings, a few years ago the Lord in His infinite mercy laid His hands upon my restless spirit and proceeded to heal me. I then staggered up the extremely painful path towards conversion, where I gradually tried to accept Christ as the centre of my life. However, I never had a particularly good relationship with Our Lady. In fact, I hardly prayed to her at all if I could help it. All this changed some months ago, and reached a climax at the MIR Prayer Meeting held at the Augustinian Church, Tarxien on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2006.

My perception of Our Lady started to shift dramatically after the events that occurred to the Caruana family. I started to acknowledge Our Lady’s presence in my life, and made an effort to pray the rosary more often. Some incidents took place during this period which showed me that I was on the right track, although many times I was (and still am) easily swayed.

19<sup>th</sup> November was my birthday, and I felt that Our Lady would show me a sign at the MIR prayer meeting held that day. Unfortunately, I was gripped by a severe illness a few hours before the meeting, which nearly prevented me from attending altogether. Against all odds, my husband and I finally managed to arrive at the meeting. However, we were already a few minutes late, and the place was packed with people. Therefore, we resigned ourselves to remaining outside one of the church doors with our two young children.

That day, the children were very agitated and my husband and I tried to control them with difficulty. It was obvious that some people thought that they were an inconvenience, and we heard comments that this was not a place for children. This distressed me greatly, as I did not want the presence of my children to thwart anyone’s experience of the meeting. I started to admonish myself for bringing them in the first place (although I knew that the MIR prayer meetings, apart from those held for young people, were held specifically for families - including children). I was in this state of anxiety when I started to silently curse myself for arriving late, thus forfeiting a place in the church. From where we stood, I almost felt excluded from the event. Therefore, I made a plea to Our Heavenly Mother to reveal her presence to me at the back of the church (as I was right outside the door)...and She did.

Immediately after I made this request to Our Lady, the group of people standing in front of me, to the left, parted slightly. I then smelt an amazing aroma of a

combination of roses, incense and something else which I could not quite place. I do not know how to explain what I smelt. All I can say is that I never smelt anything like it in my life. I felt Our Lady's presence, and an aura of peace descended on me. Sometimes, when I recall this experience I can almost see Our Lady coming towards me with outstretched arms – as if in acceptance. Her presence seems strangely familiar. Yet, I've never actually seen her, and made no effort to include her in my life until a few months ago.

Throughout the same meeting I was feeling very weak (after my illness earlier that day). At one point, I had great trouble holding my youngest child who was very restless. My husband had his hands full taking care of our elder child, so I asked Our Lady to help me. At that exact moment a woman came and asked me if she could hold my child. My son settled down on her lap peacefully. I am convinced that Our Lady, as a mother herself, understood my plight and assisted me by sending someone to my aid.

My experience cannot be proven, and some might argue that all I smelt was the aroma of incense burnt during mass (no incense was present, and my husband was standing next to me and did not smell anything). The fact that a woman offered to aid me with my child after I asked Our Lady for assistance may also be perceived as a mere coincidence. I admit that I cannot blame anyone reading this account for concluding that the only phenomenon at work was my active imagination. I also hardly need anyone to point out that I am definitely not a saint. However, I find comfort by recalling Our Lady's statement during the apparitions at Medjugorje where she claimed that she does not always choose the best people. In my case this is particularly true.

**3<sup>rd</sup> December 2006**