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Q&As



Our Lady of Sorrows Sr. Shibly Carmel Purification talks to Global Sisters Report July 3 at Elizabetta House in the Rajsahi Diocese in Bangladesh. (Uttom S. Rozario)



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RAJSHAHI, Bangladesh — August 22, 2023

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I have a prayer to give You, Lord.
I wish to have a beautiful mind
to See the world in a different way,
to live my life serenely and with loveliness,
in the core of Your Heart, Lord —
a magnificent life,
brightened by the glance
of Your amazing Presence.

Sr. Shibly Carmel Purification, a member of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows congregation, has reflected on her spiritual life through poetry like above.

Purification's attraction to reading and writing began in childhood and she has been writing poems and articles since school. Despite her willingness, her family doubted her place in religious life and tried to arrange marriage for her. She finally entered religious life in 2001 after completing her bachelor's degree.

The nun, 38, prepared herself to become a woman religious by following St. Thérèse of Lisieux. Now she lives in Elisabetta Renzi House of Formation in the Rajshahi Diocese in Bangladesh.

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Purification professed her first vows in 2009 and her final vows in 2014. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, she started to write her meditations, reflections and spiritual experiences as poems. In 2023, she published her first English book, *Silent Presence of God*, for a global audience.

Purification recently spoke to Global Sisters Report about her spiritual life, meditations, reflections and her book.

***GSR*: In Bangladesh, nuns usually do prayer, teaching or other pastoral work, but you wrote a book. Why?**

Purification: Like other nuns in Bangladesh, I pray, teach and keep financial accounts of my congregation. But in the meantime, I also write books.

Reading books, and writing is from my childhood but I never thought that I would write a book. But, by God's grace, it was possible to write it. I think my life is not mine; it is gifted by almighty God and I write his word.



Our Lady of Sorrows Sr. Shibly Carmel Purification shows her recently published book, *Silent Presence of God*. (Uttom S. Rozario)

You write alongside your daily work as a sister. But what do you do beyond that?

Now, if I were married or not religious, I would not have written this book. Because I don't find myself in myself, I find myself in God.

I have six songs and recording work in progress. I don't know how it came into my life. However, I think and believe that these are all God's gifts.

Those who are readers should read objectively and not go to a place of judgment so that they can take something in life. My next book will be a children's book of poems on Christmas.

When did you think that it was necessary to write a book and why?

I often wrote randomly but never saved it for publication as a book. But during the COVID-19 pandemic, schools were closed and going outside was banned, so I spent most of the day praying. I thought I could write about the reflections I prayed and the communication I have with God.

From that thought, I continued to write and tried to preserve it.

How did your religious life help you become a writer?

After becoming a religious nun, I became busier in my work and used to teach in schools. As teaching children in the slums was quite challenging, I had to look after the children all the time. But surely the amount of prayer in life, the amount of spirituality has increased unconsciously.

Of course, then satisfaction comes in my heart. That satisfaction, the connection with God, and the expression of one's feelings is a part of my life as a nun.

What do you want to convey in your book *Silent Presence of God*?

Silent Presence of God is composed of reflective and insightful spiritual poems. They point to where we can profoundly experience the presence of God in our daily lives and humbly ask God to fill our hearts with his goodness.



Our Lady of Sorrows Sr. Shibly Carmel Purification presents her book *Silent Presence of God* to Bishop Gervas Rozario of the Rajshahi Diocese in Bangladesh for its unveiling June 20. (Uttom S. Rozario)

God works silently in our lives. Most of the time, we ask God to walk with us. More than just sometimes, we need to take the responsibilities of our lives and tell God I want to be with you, I want to stay with you, I want to follow you, I want to hold on to your hand.

We pray to God to keep our eyes on him and to raise these desires into our hearts. I convey my personal experience and meditation in my book.

What can your readers take away from your book?

We will be able to test the experience of the presence of joy and sorrow, inner strength and shortcoming, emptiness and pain, the ups and downs of our lives.

My readers can find in the book a way to a magnificent journey to God. When one is lost, deserted, down and abandoned, one can find how God finds them and helps to rise and walk with God once again.

I think, aware of my thousands of imperfections, still God is willing to walk beside me on the way to perfection and I'm sure my reader also finds this strong dependence on God like me.

Did you write only for Christians?

When I write anything, I write it for all religions. God is universal and he also lives in our inner lives and our hearts. But one thing is clear, my writing is not for spreading Christianity, but surely my poems spread God's word and Christian values among the people.