Columns
Religious Life



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by Robancy A. Helen

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"*You may stain your sword with my blood, but you will never be able to profane my body, consecrated to Christ.*"
— St. Agnes of Rome

St. Agnes of Rome is the patroness of purity, the Children of Mary and young girls. Tradition has always credited her with being a model of purity and modesty and with maintaining her faith despite every threat and torture.

The feast of St. Agnes of Rome is observed on Jan. 21 every year. She endured suffering and embraced martyrdom to safeguard her purity. She believed that she could fully belong to Christ in purity and modesty of heart, body and soul.

Christians believe that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and we are asked to be pure in our thoughts and intentions and keep ourselves pure.

In religious life, we are taught the importance of purity and innocence. Christianity invites us to choose the religious life or the married life. Both are gifts from God, and we are called to be holy.

St. Agnes of Rome offered her virginity to Christ. But in today's world, the call to religious life is decreasing, and it is rare to see young girls and boys interested in this life.

I made my perpetual vows on St. Agnes of Rome's feast on Jan. 21, 2017. I had to wait for eight years with great expectations. These vows committed me to Christ forever. In the words of St. Paul, I was ready to lose everything to gain Christ (Philippians 3:8).

When I was informed about the vows from my superiors, I was elated. But during preparations, I was falsely accused, and it was impossible for me to say yes to Christ. My faith was put to the test and I had to choose between me and Christ. I always trusted in the power of God that he would save me from all the challenges and my superior supported and strengthened me.

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I could not accept that I was falsely accused and wanted to say no to my perpetual vows. I never ceased to pray, and this helped me overcome all my problems.

Whenever I faced problems, I prayed to the Divine Mercy of Jesus. I kept on saying, Jesus, I trust in you. This prayer always strengthened me to trust in God more than the problems.

As the day of my vows came, all my relatives came from my village. Before changing my dress for the big day, my sister came along with her children and started crying. She said, "If you make these vows, you cannot be for us; you will belong to Christ forever, and it will be difficult for us to see or be with you."

I was devastated and did not know how to react in that situation. I gathered my strength and said to her, "Christ will take care of us all. Don't worry."

Jesus and Mother Mary come to our aid during trials and tribulations, and prayer keeps us away from insecurities, evil and temptations. Prayer connects us to God and makes us realize that he is with us always.

Jesus called his first four apostles, and they left everything to follow him. The apostles had to pay the price of following Jesus, but their love for Jesus made them endure the sufferings and witness the kingdom of God on earth and Jesus' love for his Father.

Witnessing Christ is a risk for many. Some lose their fame, power and position, and many others must lose their lives to witness the truth, which is Christ himself.

At times, witnessing Christ becomes difficult as we are attached to worldly things, people and relationships, but attachment to Christ and commitment to his sacrifice make us holy persons. Transferring from one convent to the other was always a challenge, and when we had to detach from people we knew for years and the comfort of places. I am timid, and adapting to a new place was difficult. But overcoming these obstacles made me witness the providence of God. Transferring to a new place gave me opportunities to do the mission effectively, and I found my life meaningful.

When my life was dull, weary and distracted, prayer helped me realize that Christ must be the center of my life. In doing that, I could fulfill his mission of reaching out to the needy.

Jesus had to sacrifice his life to glorify the heavenly Father. Christ lost his family, friends and followers. He had everything, but he never stepped away from his

commitment. Jesus, the role model of our chosen life, invites us to follow him closely.

When we follow him closely, he assures us of his presence and gives us the power to overcome evil and fulfill his will. While on this path of entrusting my doubts and fears, I was more courageous, especially when there was no hope in the chosen life.

The more we trust him, the more he reveals his presence. That is what keeps me going. We are called to profess our commitment to Christ in our interactions with people — by sharing love and motivating young people to choose and serve him like St. Francis of Assisi, who imitated Christ, and to be as pure as St. Agnes of Rome, who courageously fought until the end to keep herself pure.