

Five years ago, my mother was struck with psychotic hallucinations which led to the family falling apart. My mom perceived people attacking her and quarrels with my neighbours led to numerous police visits to my house. My dad was forced to stay with my sister. Screams and shouts were the order of the day and I was practically living in fear. Returning home was a dread as I was afraid of all these confrontations. To top it all, it was also during this time that I was struggling with my studies while working at the same time. The peaceful world that I had once known was crumbling all around me.

As my desperate pleas to God and petitions at Novenas for my mum's healing had gone unheeded (or so I perceived), I started becoming very angry with God and blaming Him for all that was happening in my life. I lost faith in Him. Sunday Masses were a chore and I attended out of obligation. Then slowly, I stopped going to church altogether. Wild weekend partying with my friends became my only source of consolation to numb the pain and anguish within me.

It was only in September last year that I was led back to church by one of my friends who had, in no uncertain terms pointed out that I was wasting away my life! It was also around this time that my mom was healed! Peace has once more returned to my family. I then attended the Conversion Experience Retreat in December 2007 and this was definitely one of the wisest decisions I have ever made!

It was at this retreat that I began to see a clearer picture of all the events that had taken place in the last few years. I began to understand the meaning of "in God's time" and "bearing our trials with patience and courage". My mum's illness was a long and painful lesson of faith and trust in God. I realized how badly I had failed in this area! I had lost complete trust in Him and turned instead to a worldly lifestyle of partying to alleviate my pain and worries. Mistakes made during the course of these 5 years were also revealed – mistakes that estranged me from the very people whom I cared deeply for. I realized for the first time that I had been taking the easy way out and running away from my problems. I did not have the courage to "*take up my cross*". Slowly but surely, my pea brain also began to understand that although we do not get "instant" answers from God, it does not mean that He is not listening. I made my peace with God during those 4 days of the retreat. I truly repented when I realized how much I had hurt God by turning my back towards him but more so how much I had hurt myself in the process.

Today, I still have fears and apprehension; however, I now look to God for strength and courage. I firmly believe that God will always be with me, guiding me through difficult times, soothing my pain and allaying my fears. As St Paul tells us, "*If God is with us, who can be against us?*"

I invite each one of you to come for the next retreat. Come experience God's unending love and mercy – Be surprised what He has in store for you!!

**Trixi Lim**  
**Church of the Holy Cross**  
**Conversion Experience Retreat 7**