

I first heard about the Conversion Experience Retreat sometime last year. I was unmoved as I did not think I needed to go through a Conversion Retreat, having been already converted from being a Buddhist more than 10 years ago. However, as time went by, I became increasingly aware that I was spiralling down into a spiritual void that I could not seem to escape from. I was in a crisis of sorts -- I was breathing but not truly living.

I got up every morning hoping for nightfall to come again so that I could go back to bed. The work that I loved so much when I had first started became a dread and I was disillusioned. The hurt that I felt within me was vented on those closest to me -- my husband, my children and my domestic helper. Often my rage was disproportionate to the incident at hand. There was no peace at home -- only lots of shouting and hurling of hurtful words. I was beginning to detest the person that I had become, so full of anger, bitterness and unforgiveness. My relationship with others had by now also taken a nose-dive. I was startled by the gravity of my actions when my eldest son started showing signs of this very same negative behaviour towards his younger siblings. It was then that I admitted I needed help.

After a glowing testimony from a friend who had attended the previous retreat in December, I decided to sign up for the retreat in March 2008.

Through a series of events that happened on the first day of the retreat, I felt that God wanted me to confront my fears, pride and self consciousness, so that I could learn to overcome them. I also felt His comforting Presence telling me to let go and let Him be in charge.

By the second day of the retreat, I became aware that my anger and unforgiveness were manifestations of my root sins. These were issues which I neither had the courage to deal with nor confess and hence chose to completely ignore them. But by God's grace I was able to confront them and on the third day of the retreat, with a lot of tears, I made a thorough confession and felt truly liberated. I had been given a new lease of life. I am now a new creation!

During the retreat, I experienced God in a way that I had never imagined. It was a deep and personal encounter with my God, my Abba, Father! I had always equated knowing God with "Bible Knowledge" only. I did not have a personal relationship with Him because I could not fully comprehend His unconditional love for me and the reality that I was His child! I saw Him only from a distance -- this all-Holy, God Almighty figure looking down from heaven at a small and wretched sinner like me! How wrong I was! At this retreat I experienced His awesome power and His amazing love!

Nothing much has changed after the retreat -- my children continue to be a challenge, my work remains thankless, but I am seeing all these and other trials with a fresh perspective. I am able to confront these issues, knowing that God's grace will see me through. This new-found awareness has brought me a lot of peace and joy.

I thank God for making it possible for me to have this personal encounter with Him.

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Church of the Holy Spirit
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