

My Life Experience

**If any little word of ours
Can make one life the brighter;
If any little song of ours
Can make one heart the lighter;
God help us speak that little word
And take our bit of singing
And drop it in some lonely vale
To set the echoes ringing
(Author unknown)**

It gives me immense pleasure to share my life experiences. I am privileged to be born as a girl among five boys to my parents. I enjoyed my childhood and learned the values of loving, caring, sharing and to be a respectful person. School too helped me to grow and bloom in and through different stages of my life. Education helped me to realize the worth of being a girl, to enjoy freedom with responsibility and to grow in knowledge and wisdom.

It was after I finished the 10th grade and was making future plans, that the call to follow Jesus the Good Shepherd beckoned me. Joyfully I left everything and my loved ones to give myself fully to Jesus. The shift from the safety and security of a small village life to a city and living with persons of different cultures and languages was a difficult challenge one had to face.

With God's help and guided by the formators, I was able to learn English, our common language, and establish a friendly relationship with my companions and sisters. And then comes the next stage of going to college to complete my intermediate. Cycling to college, attending classes in English, that too in Science subjects, was a herculean task for me. The encouragement and guidance received from our sisters helped me to do my best and complete my studies with good result.

Then came the next stage of going for community experience. It was a relaxing and joyful time when I learned to spend more time in prayer with our sisters and taught the children who came for coaching classes. This was followed by a "work experience" in Nagpur. Here I experienced the struggles, the tiredness of body and mind and the stress and strain of a working woman. All these led me to become a more mature person and challenged me to be strong in my vocation.

The pre-novitiate formation was in yet another new place. Life is indeed a pilgrimage. We keep walking, adjusting, learning and growing. Living in a community, personal and community prayer, coming to know God's ways, attending different classes on various subjects enabled me to further deepen my vocation to follow Jesus more closely. It is at this time that I listened to the sharing of one of our sister's life experience that encouraged me to be energetic and to go forward in any situation.

After undergoing a year of pre-novitiate formation, spending a few weeks with my parents was relaxing and gave much comfort for them and me. Energized and strengthened by this break, I began the more serious stage of formation in the novitiate along with another companion and five pre-novices. I felt like a tiny plant, planted beside the running stream, was enjoying life and growing. It is at this time, as though from nowhere the strong rays of summer heat began to affect the growing plant. Living together, the many inspiring and challenging classes and other activities of the novitiate, made me realize that Religious Life is not a bed of roses.

I questioned my ability to respond to God's call and follow Jesus in this way of life. It was a struggle and a time of uncertainties that I overcame with the light from above and guidance of my formators. Once this period of darkness overcame, once again I became like the plant in spring time, new shoots, fresh leaves and flowers appeared and I am full of hope, enthusiasm and joy. Like a fresh plant I want to remain ever green in the garden of the Good Shepherd. With St. Paul I too say: "I can do all things with Christ who strengthens me." (Phil.4:13)

Asha Minj Ajith

Novice

