

Isaury Espinal  
03-13-2023  
Start Time: 9:10PM  
End Time: 9:30 PM

My salvation experience is what I would describe as a rollercoaster ride, it had its ups and downs. Before my salvation I didn't really believe in Jesus or God. I always acknowledged their existence and was even baptized as a child. My Mother or Father never really took me to church or were even religious. The religious people within my family were my Aunt Magalys, My Mom's mother Albertina and my Dad's mother Antonia. They always told me about God and Jesus but I never was really interested. My salvation journey started in the summer of me going into 9th grade. Usually during the summer I didn't do much of anything other than stay home and occasionally go out with my friends to the park. My aunt had come to my apartment to visit my family and told my mom how our local catholic church was doing a Bible Camp for the youth in the neighborhood and suggested for me and my brother to go. Obviously my little brother didn't want to go and just wanted to be on his Ipad all day so I ended up being the one to go to the camp. At first I was really uncomfortable surrounded by super religious people and I didn't have a clue about God or Jesus and I felt like a complete outcast but even if I said I never experienced God, the parish brought me under their wing and taught me about how good God is.

Though my high school years of being a part of the church weren't the prettiest, I was still discovering myself and what I wanted my spiritual path to be. I was going through a lot of family issues at that time as well which lead me into a really deep depression as well as dealing with a traumatic experience that left scarred til this day. But even though I was going through this I still wanted to feel the love of God that everyone within the church preached about. I will forever remember this retreat that I went to for the rest of my life because that's where my salvation started. I had gone to retreats before and always thought the girls sobbing next to me and going crazy for God were really weird. But at the end of this retreat I understood why they cried praises. It was a retreat at St John's college in Queens, I only went because my friends were going as well as it will give me an excuse to leave the toxic environment that my

house was at the time. It was just some retreat I was going to and I was thinking that nothing will happen and at the time my belief in God was faltering. Until the worship happened. We all sat near the stage and were just enjoying the songs that were being performed as the Eucharist with the body of Christ was being paraded around by the Priest. But one song started playing that ended up being the song that helped me towards my salvation.

The song Reckless Love by Cory Asbury started being performed and I was just listening to it normally until everything started to fade like how they do in a Disney movie when the protagonist finds their love interest. I couldn't hear anything and I couldn't see anything around me except for the Body of Christ near me, All I hear is a male voice tell me 'I love you and you are loved by me my daughter no matter what, you can come to me for the love you seek' then I heard a female voice say 'I am your mother, and I will love you and cover you in my veil of love' In the Catholic religion, I was considered a Marian which means I have many experiences with the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus. I knew in my heart and soul that it was God and Mary telling me that I was loved by them and I couldn't hold back my tears and I bursted with tears of relief and salvation, I cried at the Eucharist and felt the feeling of lightness wash over me and I was suddenly hit with an unexplained feeling of bliss and I couldn't stop smiling after that experience. After the retreat, my home life became better and stronger as well as my faith and love for God. I knew I had found salvation and I hold onto it til this day with no shame. I became a Proud Catholic that day and I still am.