

“The Cross Was My Lot”

I have never had an occasion to describe the manner in which the Blessed Virgin came to get me. Where divine Providence is concerned there is no place for coincidence.

In 1969 I made a trip to Coimbra in Portugal, with my gentleman friend. Yes, I said “gentleman friend”, for my husband had abandoned me in 1965, leaving me with two young children, the eldest of which, a girl, was acutely deaf and frail of health, and the boy was asthmatic from the age of three months. I worked full-time. My entourage encouraged me to start a new life. In my work, which was in psychiatry, it was total liberty; everything was permissible. It was the time when Paul VI was being much criticized for forbidding the “contraceptive pill”. That episode left a deep mark on me, for, in my heart, I did not like that the Holy Father should be criticized.

When I had visited that beautiful country, which pleased me immensely, the day came for me to return to Canada, and, lo and behold, I missed my plane by five minutes. What a setback! I was very dejected because my children were expecting my return on a fixed date. It was impossible to find a place on another flight. I would have to wait five days.

My friend, seeing my distress, said to me to cheer me up, “I’m taking you to Fatima. You’ll see how beautiful it is.” The following day we went to the lovely site of Fatima. At the entrance I was stopped because I was wearing a miniskirt and a sleeveless top. They gave me a very ample, pale-green coverall with long sleeves. The Sisters were very kind to us. Proud as I am, I had no adverse reaction when I had to put on that very modest garment, nor did my friend. Today, I still pray for him, because anyone who could perform such a fine act is fundamentally good.

I went to the green oak where the Virgin appeared to the three children and then to the basilica. I had the impression of entering a palace, for it was completely illuminated. I knelt down in the last pew and here are the few words I said to the Blessed Virgin: “If the life I’m leading is not good, change it.” Then we left, and I completely forgot that request made to the Virgin Mary.

Life went on, with its many sorrows and few joys. The cross was my lot. I suffered more and more, so much so that, in 1975, I made a very serious attempt on my own life; coming back to life was a divine blessing. I had touched the uttermost depths of despair. I regained consciousness three days later.

When very difficult moments used to come along I would recite the rosary, but did not continue doing so. This time, things were different.

In 1977, I quit my work, and that was very beneficial to me. I continued to pray, even reciting several decades with my arms out in a cross. I was taken with a marvelous desire to go to confession; a sweet remorse over my sins provoked this desire. But where to go, after having not gone for twelve years? Everyone received Communion in the hand; the priest was never in the confessional; the priest even looked at women too much and insistently.

So I decided to make an appointment with a Jesuit, remembering that they were the cream of the priesthood. At the meeting the Jesuit Father said to me, “There’s no need to make an accusation of your sins. I’m giving you absolution. Things are changing in the Church and it is for everyone’s good.” Nevertheless, during our conversation he remarked to me that I had a great hunger

for God, yet he did nothing to satisfy it.

Needless to say, I left there very disappointed. The desire to make a confession still obsessed me.

At the termination of a retreat with the Cistercians at Rougemont, I wanted to make my confession, but the Father said to me, "One doesn't play around in the mud; there's no need to confess yourself." Once again there was absolution without an avowal of my sins. I burned with the desire to confess myself; I believed myself excommunicated. Imagine my profound anguish!

On May 13, 1981, my daughter and I were listening to the news and learned of the attempt made on the life of the Holy Father John Paul II. We decided to go to Mass in order to pray for him. We arrived forty-five minutes early. Before the Mass there was an hour of adoration organized by a lady, the regional Animator of the Army of Mary. We were given the paper *L'Étoile*, and a leaflet bearing the act of consecration to Mary. On the leaflet was the beautiful Madonna of Fatima.

At the entrance of the church, on the back of the last pew, was a white sheet with these words on it: "If you wish to know about the Army of Mary, write your name here." Without any hesitation, I wrote down my name. I prayed with the group, before the Blessed Sacrament exposed. My soul was happy, so happy. I felt a great peace.

I subscribed to the paper. Since that time I have made my general confession; it was not easy, but a great peace took over my soul and I felt light. I am always more and more happy, even if the cross is with my every step. I love it, I desire it. I ask Mother Mary to teach me to suffer well.

Mother Mary always answers the prayer of a soul that is sincere and of good will. Did she not answer my Fatima prayer, since she brought me to know the Army of Mary on **May 13**? She signed this marvelous grace to my soul; yes, she answered me on May 13, 1981, a date graven forever on my memory. With the dear God there is no such a thing as coincidence. I am very happy to be a Daughter of Mary in her Army. I have to abandon myself even more to this ever-so-good Mother; every day I pray for that, as well as for my fidelity.

If our Excellencies the Bishops knew of all the good this Work can accomplish in souls, they would be the first to belong to it. May the Immaculate, Mother and Lady of All Peoples, enlighten them!

Thank you for this marvelous Work!

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Annette GrandMaison