

## *INTRODUCTION*

Sister Charlotte Keckler was born in 1898, and entered the convent in 1911. Between the Wars she spent 22 years in cloistered convents, then escaped, only to be recaptured and to spend another 28 months in convents till she escaped the second time.

A few years thereafter, in 1945, she experienced Christian salvation, and began giving this testimony throughout the United States and Canada. For the first half of the twentieth century she was a slave to apostate religion and in the second half, she got her liberty and her vocation, helping nuns to escape the same conventual prison she had suffered in, and testifying to the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

Charlotte lived her last years in Napa, California, and was a faithful saint of New Life Tabernacle, a United Pentecostal Church in that city, until she died September 28, 1983. Her pastor was Rev. Paul Price at the time. The full story of her life can be read in the book, "From Convent to Pentecost" dictated by Sister Charlotte to Nilah Rutledge in 1957, with the request that it would only be published after her death, and published in 1999 by Rose of Sharon Books, Box 2183, East Dartmouth, Halifax, NS, B2W 3Y2, Canada.

Her story can be verified by contacting T. F. Tenney, Superintendent, Louisiana District, UPCI (United Pentecostal Church) and Rev. Paul Price, Superintendent, Western District, UPCI, USA. She frequently gave public testimonies like the following in the 50s and 60s. This Testimony gives rather more detail than the taped testimony about Sister Charlotte's experiences after her first convent escape and also about her conversion and of her encounter with the healing power of Jesus at a Brother Branham meeting.

May the Lord Jesus bless and enlighten you as you read.



# Nun's Testimony

*By Sister Charlotte Keckler*

I was reared in a devout Roman Catholic home and, although our home contained many religious items, we never had a Bible there. Consequently, I never heard of God's wonderful plan of salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus. No one ever explained to me that I only had to invite Him into my heart and ask Him to save me from all my sins to be born again (Revelation 3:20). Instead, I only knew what I was taught in the catechisms and in the institution which we attended faithfully.

I had a deep love and devotion to the God I did not really know personally and I yearned to give my life to Him completely. According to the teaching I received, the way to do this was to become a nun and enter a convent. My parish priest pressed this idea on me as did the nuns who taught in my parochial school.

How well I remember the day two nuns from my school accompanied me home. The parish priest joined them there for a conference with my father and mother. In my family, children did not interrupt grown-ups but asked to speak. When given permission I told my father simply, "Dad, I want to go into the convent." Both parents wept for joy at this because they had been thoroughly indoctrinated to believe that to give a child to the convent in this matter was a great service to God.

They were thrilled that one of their girls had decided to give her life to the convent in order to pray for lost humanity. It was all so exciting and religious, and none of us had any idea what was involved or implied in all this. Tragically, both my parents and I had been cleverly manipulated by carefully trained recruiters, representatives of the Roman Catholic system, whom we trusted. Not for one moment did we suspect the deception, lies and horror which lay behind the convent doors. We believed what we had been taught. Like sheep we were led to the slaughter, totally unaware of the fate planned for us.

Twelve months went by and the year 1910 came, when I was to leave home. My mother and I busied ourselves with preparations. The priest said that they had no place for me near home; therefore, my parents had to take me a thousand miles cross-country to enter me in the convent boarding school. I was then three months from my thirteenth birthday, an immature child, being snatched from my parents at a critical time in my growing up.

Never had I been away from my parents, not even overnight. When they

left after staying with me for three days, I was smitten with an aching loneliness and homesickness. In all of the planning for the move, I didn't really realize that I was going to be separated from my parents, never to see them again. I was miserable and unhappy.

Catholic priests select children at the confessional box and begin to plant the seed to steer them into the convents and the priesthood. Even when I was seven, I would go immediately to the statue of the Virgin Mary when I entered the church to pray, believing she would help me to make a good confession. My childish heart was very honest and the priest always heavily emphasized the absolute necessity of making a good confession. We could keep back nothing if we expected absolution from our sins.

I entered what was classified as a sister of the open order, until I took my white veil at the age of sixteen and one half. Everything was beautiful, and I had no fears or doubts in my mind. The things I was taught were in line with what I had been told earlier before entering the convent. There was no reason to suspect that there were vast areas which were hidden and had been deliberately misrepresented.

Shortly after arrival at the convent, I resumed my schooling. I had just graduated from eighth grade and they had promised me a high school education plus college. Actually, I got little beyond the high school level, other than some nurse's training. The schooling I received was under duress and terrible difficulties. Following this, I was pushed into the crucial training required of all noviates entering the convent.

Six months before I was fourteen, the Mother Superior began to urge me to take the white veil. She made it all sound so glamorous, romantic and fascinating. I would take the white veil, dressed in a beautiful white wedding dress. An actual marriage ceremony would follow and I would receive a ring and become the spouse or bride of Christ. It was not difficult for an impressionable teenager to be swayed into eager agreement.

Mother Superior then wrote my father to tell him how much money he must send to pay for my wedding dress. Because he was wealthy, it was a sizeable amount. I learned later that it was customary to demand three to five times the cost of the dress. The nuns bought the material and made the dress so that the actual cost was small and the rest of the money could be pocketed. No opportunity was overlooked to milk funds from the faithful.

I was always devout and often walked the fourteen stations of the cross, but after deciding to take the white veil, my fervency increased. In my anxiety to be holy enough to be worthy to become the bride of Christ, I began to crawl the stations of the cross each Friday. Surely this would draw me closer to God and prepare me to take the step I planned.

My heart was bursting with idealistic devotion and love toward the false goals I had been taught would please and honour God in my life. Hundreds of innocent girls go down this trail into the maw of the convents annually, starry eyed and desiring to give their hearts, minds and souls in unselfish service, praying for lost humanity.

With the wedding ceremony behind them, nuns are treated as married woman. We were taught that our family would be saved if we continued to live in the convent, serving the Roman Catholic system. A child's concern for family members, especially erring ones, is often manipulated by the father confessor to convince him/her to go into religious vocations. As a child, I looked on my father confessor as God and others with whom I have talked did the same thing. This gives his insinuations and suggestions tremendous power and influence. I thought of him as being holy and infallible, totally incapable of lying.

After I took the white veil, everything continued, rosy, religious and beautiful. Everyone was good to me and I lived in the open order convent I saw nothing to lead me to believe it would not continue this way. No girl is subject to the priest until she is twenty-one, but I knew nothing of this for all was carefully hidden and covered. There was no clue to cause one to guess what lay behind the black veil and those double locked doors of the closed, cloistered convent.

Up until I took the black veil I was allowed to receive one letter per month from my family and was permitted to write one to them from the convent. When I wrote I knew that much of it would be censored and marked out by the Mother Superior who read all incoming and outgoing mail. My letters from home were always so marked out until virtually nothing was left to read. I used to weep over all those inked out sections, wondering and worrying over what my mother had been trying to tell me, but there was no way I could ever know.

No one imprisoned behind those walls ever comes out to tell the awful story. Priests will glibly pooh, pooh the idea that there is anything amiss. They will tell you that in this country and elsewhere sisters can walk out of the convents anytime they please. That is a lie! I was shut up for twenty-two years and tried everything to escape. I even carried tablespoons to the dungeons and desperately dug in their dirt floors attempting to find a way out. Why a tablespoon? All the other tools were locked up or carefully supervised. They were used to dig the tunnels and underground chambers. Convents are constructed like prisons to thwart the escape of the nuns.

As I approached eighteen, Mother Superior began to work on me again. Remember that these ruthless women are carefully selected and trained for

their jobs. I was making my plans to come out of the convent after taking the white veil to become a nursing sister in the Roman Catholic system. However, she had noted my endurance and devotion so she called me into her office for a conference.

"Charlotte," she said, "I have been watching you. You have a strong body and the devotion to make a good nun, a cloister nun. I believe you are the type who would be willing to give up home and everything you love in the world to hide yourself away behind convent doors. I believe that you would be willing to sacrifice and live in crucial poverty in order to be able to pray for lost humanity. You would have to be willing to suffer in order to achieve this."

We were constantly taught that living loved ones as well as those already in purgatory would be delivered sooner by the nun's suffering here. Mother Superior had observed that I was willing to suffer without murmuring or complaining, therefore she broached the idea of my taking the black veil. Of course I had no idea what the cloistered nuns did or how they lived so she began to tell me about the cloisters.

Mother Superior told me that in the cloisters, I would have to shed my own blood as Jesus did on Calvary. I would have to be willing to endure heavy penances and live in crucial poverty the rest of my life. Already I was living in poverty, but if this would make me holier, draw me closer to God and a better nun, I thought it would be worth it to accept this crucial poverty, whatever it was.

Two months before my twenty-first birthday I was summoned into Mother Superior's office and papers were shown to me in which I would sign away any and all inheritance I would ever have to the Roman Catholic system. Priests work hard to entice girls from wealthy families into the convents, for the system is enriched by their inheritances. I told her I needed some more time to think about it.

For two years I seriously considered it. If I took my perpetual vows it would mean going behind closed doors in a cloistered convent, and there all my life would belong to God. It would be one of study, devotion, meditation and prayer; however I would be able to win many more souls to God because I would have more time to pray. I believed and accepted all that she said and one day informed her that I had decided to go into cloister.

To begin, I would be required to lie for nine hours in a casket, dying to the world. Never again would I see my people or return home, for I would be bound by the cloister's convent. This was a tremendous price for a twenty-one year old girl to pay, to give up all that she loved and held dear in the world, but this had to be done in order to win souls to God. I was

dressed in a dark red velvet funeral shroud for this wedding ceremony which was performed by the bishop. Both the dress and coffin had been made by the nuns in the cloister.

I knew that when I came out of that coffin, I would never see or hear from my family again; never leave the convent; and would be buried there when I died. I walked to the casket, climbed in and stretched out. Two little nuns came and covered the entire casket with heavy black draperies which reeked of incense. I thought I would surely suffocate. On one side of the room were the usual statues and on the other, Mother Superior, the nuns and priests were seated. For the nine long hours I lay in the coffin they kept vigil and chanted constantly.

The one purpose of being in the coffin was to learn to hate my mother, father and all other earthly ties--all for the love of God. I must forget them, hate them, crowd them completely from my heart, mind and life. All this was to enable me to be a better wife to God.

Lying there, I reminisced about my childhood at home. I remembered the dresses my mother had made for me, but I would never again wear one. I thought of delicious meals, warm beds, and all of the rich and full family life I had had. Of course I wept bitterly and sobbed as my heart ached for those loved ones I would never see again. It was an agonizing experience and I think I loved them more than I ever had before.

I wrung out and spilled every tear in my body. It was so hard to give up everything. In my agony and anguish I shuddered and groaned until there simply were no more tears left. After several hours of this, I regained my composure somewhat. I resolved, "Charlotte, you are going to make the best Carmelite nun who ever was, because both inside and outside the convent you always do your very best."

When the ordeal finally ended, a bell was tapped and two little nuns immediately lifted the black drapes from the casket. When I stepped from it I was ushered into a room where I was to take my perpetual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Mother Superior opened a place in my ear lobe and drew out blood, for these must be signed in my own blood.

I vowed to be willing to live in crucial poverty for the balance of my life (although I did not know then what this meant). Next the vow of chastity bound me never to legally marry because I was now the wife of God (by virtue of the wedding ceremony performed earlier). Then the one of obedience, the hardest of all. I promised absolute, unquestioning obedience to the Pope, all the prelates of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, to the Mother Superior of the convent and to the rules of that convent. I was totally ignorant of how sweeping these commitments were and had no

realistic concept of the things to which I was pledging myself.

After I had signed all the vows, Mother Superior whacked off all my long hair with the scissors. This was to be sold to the highest bidder, for human hair brings a good market price and they commercialise on everything. (This explains the unbelievable wealth of the church.) After cutting the hair, she took clippers and shaved me bald. For the rest of my life, every two months the clippers would go on my head to shave me bald. The heavy nun's headgear would be very cumbersome if she kept her hair. Besides, there was neither time nor facilities to wash hair in the convents.

The next step in dehumanising and disorientation was to take away my entire family name and replace it with the name of a patron saint. As she did this Mother Superior emphasized that, although I was not holy enough to stand in the presence of God, I could always pray to my patron saint and she would intercede to get my prayers through to God. I accepted all this as truth because I did not know any better. Following this if someone had inquired about me at the convent by my given name, they would have been informed that no such person was inside the convent.

Next, Mother read this statement: "As Jesus suffered here on earth, so must we suffer as nuns. We must live our lives as martyrs in the convent. In the Garden of Olives, Jesus shed 62,700 tears for you and me; He shed 98,600 drops of blood for you and me; He received 667 strokes on His body; on His cheek, 110 strokes; on His neck, 107 strokes; on His back, 180 strokes; on His breast, 77 strokes; on His head, 108 strokes; on His side, 32 strokes. They spit in His face 32 times; pulled His beard many times and threw Him to the ground 38 times. By the crown of thorns He received 100 wounds; pleaded for our salvation 900 times, and carried the cross to Calvary 320 steps." I believed all these religious lies, which years later I learned were the invention of a corrupt Pope.

The last statement she read said, "You will receive a plenary indulgence for your sins and entirely escape the pains of purgatory. Reward them as martyrs who spill their blood for the faith." She said that if we lived in the convent without breaking a rule, one day when we died we would not go to purgatory but go directly to be with Jesus. What she did not tell us was that it is humanly impossible to live in a convent without breaking rules.

After the vows were signed all of my personal identification was destroyed. Sixty days before, Mother Superior had laid a sheet of paper in front of me. She said I was not to read it, just to sign at the bottom. I didn't realize then how completely I was signing away any and all inheritances which might ever come to me. They were all assigned to the convent. When my brother was ordained as Roman Catholic priest he also signed



everything over to the hierarchy. There is not a lawyer in the land who can break this confiscation assignment, for I have checked it out.

When I took my perpetual vows and signed away my life and possessions I had sold my soul for a mythical mess of pottage. Not only are the nuns systematically destroyed in body but hundreds have their minds shattered and die premature deaths under the cruel and heartless convent bondage. To make it even worse the poor creatures sacrifice all of this and then go out to meet God, Christless and lost for all eternity. How we need to pray for those closed off from the world and the gospel all over the world in these terrible prisons called cloistered convents.

Mother Superior next locked her arm in mine and we walked down the centre of another room. A Roman Catholic priest, dressed in holy habit, came to meet us from the other end of the room. When we met, Mother dropped my arm and the priest stepped around and attempted to lock his arm in mine.

I recoiled in horror at this intimacy, for never, in all my years in the convent had a priest ever approached me like this. Always they had been kind, considerate and very polite. Something about the familiarity of his touch and the lecherous look in his eyes repulsed and insulted me although I did not understand exactly why. I jerked loose, blushing with embarrassment and exploded, "Shame on you." I felt violated and threatened. He turned red in the face and became very angry at my rejection of his overtures to lead me to the "bridal chamber."

Evidently Mother Superior overheard the exchange for she quickly returned, called by my church name, and informed me that after I had been in the convent a while I would not feel this way. She said all nuns felt the same in the beginning and sternly reminded me of the wedding ceremony I had gone through and of my obligation. She said a priest's body was sanctified and what they did was not sin. I was terrified, and sobbed hysterically, my mind reeling and I refused to accept what she said.

She became very angry and stiffly said, "As the Holy Ghost placed the seed in the Virgin Mary's womb and Jesus Christ was born, even so the priest represents the Holy Ghost, therefore it is not a sin for nuns to bear his children."

I could scarcely believe my ears. I had been deceived and it was too late to turn back! This ghastly statement made me frantic. When she finally gave me permission to speak I burst out, "Mother Superior, why didn't you tell me this before I took my perpetual vows?" She pursed her lips tightly but said nothing.

Needless to say, I was in a state of numbed shock and horror at what she

was saying. It was like an unbelievable nightmare. All my bridges were burned and there was no way back. I could not get out of the convent. Hysterically, I sobbed and told the priest that I wanted to go home. I begged him to call my father to come and get me. I did not want to go any further with this. All my illusions had been shattered and I could not bear the picture which was looming up before me.

I related how three months before I left home to come to the convent (at age 13) my mother told me she would rather dig my grave with her own hands and bury me than to hear that I had lost my virtue. Because I knew nothing of sex, she had then explained it to me. When I related this to Mother and the priest, they stood and laughed at me like fools. They found my naivety and innocent gullibility hilarious.

When this sort of betrayal happens I can tell you that you stand absolutely alone. Communication with your loved ones and friends has already been cut off. Sealed off, you have no one to understand or help and soon the numbing realization of the utter hopelessness of your situation sets in. It is like waking up and finding that an unbearable nightmare is not a dream but a dreadful reality.

I now belonged to Rome and the Pope and Mother Superior had turned me over to a lustful priest who leeringly invited me to join him in the "bridal chamber." I did not enter the convent to become a bad, but a holy woman, by giving my heart and life to God. I firmly rejected his sexual advances and was strong enough to put up quite a fight had he insisted. I was prepared to struggle to my last drop of blood to preserve my virtue.

When I signed those vows with my own blood I did not realize the enormity of what I had done. I had surrendered away every human right, in order to become a mechanical, robot-like person. From henceforth I would not be able to sit, stand, or speak without permission. I could not lie down, eat or do anything else unless authorized by my superiors. I was allowed to see, hear and feel only what they permitted and ordered. I had become a helpless puppet of the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

The next step was my initiation and for this I had to go to my convent. They had my passport all signed and tickets ready to ship me out to a foreign country. Two priests met us at the boat and we were taken, heavily veiled, out into the mountains to be put in a cloistered convent, one story underground. (Of course when the priest sat in our living room at home he never told my dad I would live for years one or two stories underground in a foreign land.)

I faced initiation penances, so after three or four days at the new convent, about 9:00 o'clock one morning the Mother Superior told me to

come with her. She told me we were going to do penance and I would begin my initiation as a Carmelite nun. I remember when she walked me down that dark tunnel and into the room one story below ground level. I had always lived on the first floor, but after taking the black veil I was to live one or two stories underground. When we entered the cold, dark room it was hard to see, for all the light came from seven flickering candles. I was frightened and apprehensive, not knowing what to expect, nor what she planned to do to me.

As we came closer, I could make out a nun lying on a board six feet long (a cooling board). I realized with a shock that she was dead. Although I was not afraid of the dead nun my heart ached for her. When I signed those perpetual vows I had unknowingly signed away every human right. I was not allowed to see, to hear, to complain, to feel or to murmur. I had ears but was to be deaf; eyes but must not see; feelings but soon would be brainwashed so they would be blotted out. As I stood looking at the body, many thoughts and questions raced through my mind but I was bound to silence. How and why did she die?

Mother Superior ordered me to stand vigil over the dead body for one hour, then she went away. I was required to walk over to the frail body frequently, sprinkle it with ashes and holy water and say repeatedly, "Peace be unto you." In an hour a bell was to be tapped somewhere and out of the mysterious darkness behind me another nun came to relieve me. Because she was barefooted on the dirt floor there was no sound. We were forbidden to speak, therefore my relief reached out and touched me on the shoulder. I leaped with fright and began screaming hysterically at the top of my voice.

This loss of control meant I must be punished by being tossed into a dark and dirty dungeon. There I lay for three days and nights, without food or water, just because I had shrieked in fear--a terrible crime. I assure you I never screamed again. You learn fast in a convent to observe the rules.

On the fourth day, again Mother Superior told me we were going to do penance and we went deep under the convent into another dark chamber. We started through the tunnels (there were 35 miles of them under this convent) and, other than candles, there was no light in the rooms we passed. She marched me into a large penance chamber, arm in arm, on our toes, with downcast eyes.

In the flickering candlelight I saw the usual statues of Jesus and Mary in the room. There was also a large eight foot cross, made of heavy, rough timber, lying on its side. She took me near the foot of it and proceeded to strip my clothes off down to the waist. Then she bent my body down over

the cross, pulled my hands down below it and fastened them securely to my knees, under the cross.

This was where I was to begin to spill my blood as Jesus had shed His on Calvary. I had been told earlier that I would shed my blood for lost humanity, but they never gave me any idea of how this would be accomplished. Now I was to learn one of the many ways this was to take place. Two other nuns were given flagellation whips fashioned from six leather straps fastened to a wooden handle. In the ends of the thongs were embedded a number of sharp, jagged bits of metal. They began to flog me methodically with these cruel instruments until my bare flesh was thoroughly lacerated from hundreds of cuts and my blood ran all over the floor.

Twist and writhe as I might, there was no escape from the relentless, fiery bite of the ruthless whips. Let me tell you they did a thorough job on me and I was aflame with awful pain and agony. Sobbing and screaming did not stop them, nor were they affected by pitiful cries for mercy. They were well trained and utterly heartless and I was swallowed up in a sea of pain and awful despairing. It was unbelievable, yet it was happening. I thought the beating would never stop. I was helpless and totally without defences.

Mother Superior released my hands from my knees after I had slumped into a moaning, suffering heap and she was satisfied I had spilled enough blood for this time. She drug me to my feet but did not bathe me nor treat the mass of bleeding wounds on my body. She simply pulled my clothes back on and I was forced to work all day, until 9:15 that night. Needless to say, the day was one of agony, but no one seemed to notice. With a sickening horror I realized the meaning of the teachings I had received that God is made happy by this penance and other sufferings. This was supposed to make us holier.

That day was a living hell for me, but this was only the beginning of hundreds of such days. When night came I stood in front of my cell bed where we were required to undress, with our backs to each other. I could not remove my clothing. The garments stained with blood had dried and were stuck tightly to my gaping wounds. It was several nights before I could take them off, and then it was an agonizing and bloody procedure. At mealtime I was not hungry because of the terrible misery I was suffering.

Ordinarily I would have undressed and have slipped into a muslin nightgown, and then enter my cell to be locked in for the night. For a bed we had only a slab or wood--no mattress, springs, pillow or blanket. Before we were permitted to lie down we were required to kneel on a

penance prayer board. This contained hundreds of upright, sharp wires to pierce the knees. The upper section where we were to prostrate ourselves upon our arms was also a mass of sharp wires.

Another day the Mother Superior took me through a long, dark tunnel hall for my next initiation penance. As we entered the chamber, again there were seven candles. As she marched me up under the candles I spotted some ropes dangling from the ceiling with some sort of metal clamps on the ends. She made me stand very close, facing the wall and extending my arms in the air. Quickly she snapped the metal bands securely around each thumb. She then stepped to one side and began to turn a crank which took the ropes straight up until I was slowly hoisted from the floor. When I was suspended on the tips of my bare toes she fastened the handle, walked out without a word and slammed and locked the door. The weight of my body on those thumbs and my toes was excruciating.

I was already whimpering and moaning in misery. I had no idea how long I would stay there. Always in these things, you hung there wondering if you might die before they came back to free you. In the white heat of the waves of unbearable pain which wrack the body and mind, death would be a blessed way out.

As hours stretched interminably into days and nights there was no way to calculate how long you had been there. There was no sun; no sounds other than your own fevered sobbings and screams. It was like being buried alive without food or water. Torment and delirium causes you to loose track of reality and nothing seems real except the ever present torture and pain.

This was another part of their brainwashing technique. I could do nothing but to stand there, screaming and crying. No one would hear or help me or even care. Three, four, six and finally ten agonizing hours crept by and every bone, muscle and nerve in my tortured body was screaming for relief. The maddening, unending pain is indescribable and I also grew hungry and thirsty. When my hands and arms began to swell tightly I believed I was going to die.

I had desperately prayed to all the statues in the room. Eventually I realized the Virgin Mary was not hearing a word I sobbed. Hysterically I shouted and pleaded for help from my patron saint; from St. Jude, St. Bartholomew, and every other idol or saint I could ever remember hearing about. I was surrounded by an unearthly silence, broken only by my own fevered screams and groans and the sputtering candles.

There I hung, wracked with pain and saturated in my own human filth, for there was no break in the torture regime for toilet facilities. Just as I felt

I was going completely insane, Mother Superior walked in. Directly on the wall in front of me was an adjustable shelf which she raised to the level of my face. On it she placed a pan of water and a pan containing one small potato.

I was starving for water and food but how was I to get it? Painfully I scooted on my toes, tilting first one arm, then the other, straining to reach the pans. When I managed to reach them, I felt the tissues in my lungs tearing with terrible pain. As a matter of fact, many nuns contract tuberculosis after going through this torture. However, only by enduring such pain and strain could I manage to get water or food. I bumped and spilled most of it.

Nine days later Mother Superior came and released first one thumb and then the other and I collapsed in a faint to the floor. My limbs were swollen and shrieking with pain. My eyes felt as if they were being pushed out of my head and my arms were swollen to three times normal size. No part of my anatomy was free from the throbbing pain and soreness.

Of course I could not move. Two nuns picked me up by the shoulders and feet and took me, moaning incoherently, into the infirmary and laid me on a slab of wood. They cut off all my clothes for I was saturated with my own urine and bowel movements. This was another part of the carefully planned brutalisation and dehumanisation program, designed to produce mindless robots. Following this episode I could not even walk for two and a half months and would have been happy to die.

One day I was called out and again marched down those dread tunnels, not knowing what misery and pain I faced. She marched me into a room with a straight chair with a high back. Pushing me down into the chair, she then removed my headdress and shoved my head forward in my lap and placed my hands on my knees. Quickly she fastened my head and wrists in stocks so I could not move. This done she positioned a faucet directly over my bare head and adjusted it so that it began on my head, a drop at a time.

I cringed in anticipation for I had witnessed others who had been subjected to this for ten long hours. After a short time the drops hitting in the same spot will break the strongest person. Often I and others would writhe and twist against the binding of the stocks, desperately trying to escape that pounding drop of water, even foaming at the mouth. Screaming and crying is never absent from these horror holes, deep under the ground, where no one with an ounce of humanity or compassion will ever hear. Pleas for mercy only bring longer and worse penances.

Many a nun has gone stark raving mad after being repeatedly subjected to this penance. Do not worry, the convent takes care of this too. The world

outside will never know the truth. There are underground dungeons for those who have nervous or mental breakdowns. There will be reports and records of the nun and how she died, all lies.

You must realize that this entire religious structure is based on lies and deception and it is small wonder that at all costs, even human life, the hypocritical cloak of righteousness of the Roman Catholic system must be maintained. They will stop at nothing to protect it. Slander, lies, frame-ups, changing and destroying documents, injury and even murder are standard and acceptable procedure. The average person with a conscience and some sort of moral code will struggle to grasp the enormity and inhuman demonic intelligence which drives this religious monster.

Once I was taken to one of the filthy dungeons with dirt floors. I then had my ankles fastened securely to leather straps in the rings at the top of rods mounted in cement. I was standing with my feet in those rings until my strength failed or I fainted. When that happened I just crumpled over with my chest touching my ankles. After getting to a certain stage of pain and exhaustion there is nothing you can do. I must then stay in this cramped position for two or three days, depending on the whims of my tormentors. No one will come and there was no food, water, or toilet facilities. Bugs crawled over my body. It is no wonder there is such a cry against such horrors being uncovered and revealed.

The loneliness in the convent is inhuman and cruel, for there are no friends there. Everyone is set up to spy on everyone else and the slightest infraction of rules brings instant and harsh punishment. There were no friendships among the nuns. Suspicion and separation was the order of the day for convent living. We were taught to trust no one and depend upon no one, by a methodical and systematic isolation. The victims could never be allowed to unite to do something about conditions.

Communists followed a similar program in Korean prisoner-of-war camps to prevent any closeness or cooperation between the inmates. Each nun is taught to be a policeman to watch and inform on all others. Betrayal of others causes the informer to be in good standing with Mother Superior. Her approval is desired so strongly that often the sisters make up and exaggerate things in order to gain this kind of favor. Absolute obedience in everything is demanded in the convent and you are wise to learn to obey quickly and without question.

Each time I came in my cell I was required to kneel there, praying for lost humanity, while I suffered and shed more of my blood. Only after this could I lie down on the slab which served as a bed. Promptly at seven minutes before midnight a bell was always tapped and cells unlocked so

we all could gather in the inner chapel to pray another hour for lost humanity. At seven minutes till one o'clock we returned to our cells to be locked up again until 4:30 a.m. At this time a bell was tapped and we had exactly five minutes to get dressed and report for duty, barefooted. This is a daily routine. To be late in dressing brought severe punishments.

Each night at 8:00 p.m. we were required to go down a long, dark hall to do a penance in the meditation room. Located there was a tiny room about four foot square, which contained a human skull and candle on a small table. We were to slip to our knees, gaze into the skull and meditate for one hour on death. When this hour was over, a bell was tapped and we returned to our cells where we dropped all our clothes. We then took three interlaced chains with sharp edges (which hung in our cells) and began to lay stripes on our own bodies in imitation of the stripes of Christ on earth.

Sometimes, because of lack of food and strength it was difficult to lay on many stripes. If Mother Superior suspected this, she would order you to strip and have two other nuns to whip you viciously. Following this you would lose all desire for your coffee, bread, or anything else for a few days, because of being in such misery.

This was cloistered convent life, where a merciless system of brainwashing was employed, just as Russia does in the concentration camps. It is exactly the same brutal barbarism, but Rome rides under the banner of religion while communist Russia is openly atheistic.

In the refractory where our meals were served, were two long wooden tables and each nun was assigned a certain place to sit. No one ever sits in another's place. For breakfast we were given only a big tin cup of strong black coffee with a piece of black bread which weighed exactly four ounces. Although we worked very hard all day there was no lunch, and about 5:00 p.m. we would gather again in the refractory, if we could walk under our own power.

For supper fresh vegetables were cooked together, making a tasteless, watery soup, without seasonings of any kind. This was served in a pie tin with two ounces of black bread and a tin cup of strong black coffee. Two or three times per week we were given one-half glass of skim milk.

This was our monotonous diet, 365 days per year. The only exception was Christmas day when we were each given one tablespoon of molasses. My, what a delight that was, and we ate it very slowly, savouring each drop. All year long we looked forward to this treat.

With the limited food rations, three hundred sixty-five days per year, we never went to bed without gnawing hunger pains. For years I would roll and toss at night, unable to sleep, and wondering how much longer I could



endure this continued torment. I assure you that it is sheer misery to live on the brink of controlled starvation constantly. Of course starving persons are weaker and can be more easily coerced and forced into every form of degrading obedience and subservience. This was executed with fiendish delight and a definite purpose to crush the human spirit.

With such a horribly restricted diet, torture, bloodshed and long, hard hours, it is little wonder that bodies fail and become sickly and many nuns die young in the cloistered convents. Remember there are cloistered convents in the United States.

In preparing vegetables, potatoes were boiled with skins on and peeled after cooking. Once while on kitchen duty, I was throwing a pile of these potato peelings in the garbage. I was so hungry I quickly snatched two handfuls from the can and hid them in my clothing. I told no one, for in the convent everyone is watching each other and there are informers everywhere who betray others. That night, in my cell, greedily I gobbled down the potato skins because I was so starved.

The next morning at 9:00 sharp Mother Superior announced with a smirk that I was to do penance and I knew this was not a regular penance day. With sinking heart I went with her to one of the torture chambers. It was a huge room with the usual seven candles. When she tapped a bell, two little nuns appeared, quickly binding my hands and feet together. Mother then ordered one to pinch my nostrils tightly so that I was forced to open my mouth to breathe. She then dumped a heaping tablespoon of hot cayenne pepper in my mouth and I had to choke it down in order to breathe. For two days after this I was plagued with itching, burning hives all over my body. This, for eating a bit of garbage!

Another time I saw a piece of bread lying on a table, and watched it for several days. Finally I took the bread, ate it in my cell, and the next morning Mother Superior again said we were going to do penance. Somehow she found out about the scrap of bread. This time I was taken to a room with a square table and was made to stand at the edge with my hand and wrist strapped on a board.

It was very dark and my eyes adjusted slowly in the dim light. She moved over to one side to manipulate some sort of control and suddenly another heavy board smashed down on the hand and wrist. The blinding pain caused me to slump to the floor, but I could not get loose and was dangling by the helpless, injured hand. Stealing even a mouthful of stale bread was treated as a heinous crime and drew swift and cruel retribution.

As the years dragged by I learned to use a hammer, saw, shovel and anything else a man normally does. We worked very hard, performing

heavy manual labour, digging out underground rooms and tunnels, building walls, plastering, ect. Often we were two, three or four miles back in the tunnels. Sometimes we wondered if we even had voices because of the strict rule of silence, and would speak in whispers to each other. The very next morning Mother Superior would call the offenders out and say, "You are going to do penance." We wondered how she could have heard us. One day we learned that all thirty-five miles of tunnel under the convent were wired so she could hear every whisper.

Working back in the tunnels we listened for the tap of the bell which signalled us to come in for meals. Sometimes, due to fatigue or distance we would arrive late. Because each was in her own place, it was obvious who was tardy. When this happened, we had to ask a nun to hand us our tin cup, pan and tablespoon. We then had to crawl behind each nun, begging for one tablespoon of her food. After crawling to each one, the offenders sat on the floor to eat. This is supposed to humble them by breaking their wicked pride, and also to promote promptness.

Our day in the convent began at 4:30 in the morning when Mother Superior tapped a bell. This signal meant we had exactly five minutes to get dressed. In the beginning I was late a half a minute, but the punishment was so severe for this minor infraction of rules that I never was late again. Raw terror and cruel punishment bring absolute and unquestioning obedience in the convent to every rule and order, no matter how unreasonable or trivial. Lies and deceit covering and concealing such infractions to avoid the dire consequences become a way of life for the nuns.

When we finished dressing, we would march on tiptoes, with downcast eyes, to report to the Mother Superior. There she assigned us our daily chores. These could be scrubbing, washing clothes, ironing, cooking, or other heavy and hard labour assignments.

Washing was done in twelve old-fashioned washtubs with rubboards. We ironed with cast iron flatirons, heated on a stove. Not only did we do the laundry and ironing for our convent but the local priests were free to load us with all of their linens and clothing, which they did. After all, the service, performed by slave labour, was free to them.

Down in the laundry room there were rough cement floors and the heavy washing in twelve tubs caused a lot of soapy water to be sloshed on the floor. We walked around in our bare feet because shoes and stockings were a luxury we were denied in the convent. Suddenly Mother Superior would glide up, terrifying everyone because there is no way to know why she had come. When she made such an appearance, someone invariably

had to suffer. Because things were done so quietly in a convent, we learned to sense her presence before she arrived.

One of her favourite tricks in the laundry room was to order one or more nuns to prostrate themselves on the cold, wet, soapy, floor. This done, with a cruel sneer she would order that the victim lick long crosses on the rough cement with her tongue. She watched intently to see if there was the slightest flicker of anger, distaste or hesitation on the face of the one forced to lick the crosses. If she did, she would assign ten to twenty-five more crosses to be done. Believe me, the tongue was always raw and bleeding before she was satisfied, and the victim would be unable to eat or drink for a day or two because of the mangled tongue. Many times Mother would return the very next day, seize the same victim and force her to repeat the crosses again.

Hard manual labour was advocated as a good physical discipline. In our emaciated condition because of the constant torture and systematic starvation we were driven and kept in a state of chronic fatigue and exhaustion. We were property of the Pope and the system, to be worked to death for their pleasure. All the crying and pleading we did would never be heard by anyone who would lift a finger to help us.

Another favoured punishment was to compel us to crawl up and down an aisle ten times, upright on the knees. After I made it five or six times my knees were killing me. Drained of strength, I could not continue but collapsed in a faint. Mother Superior shook me roughly, pulled me back on my knees and commanded me to resume crawling. Desperately I tried to finish my assignment. The next day she might order me to do the same thing again and this would rip off the scabs from my injured knees, further bruising and tearing them.

This is typical of torments and tortures to which the little nuns are subjected day after day, year in and year out. There is no mercy, only heartless cruelty and this multiplies and reinforces the dreary hopelessness and despair which grips the entire cloister.

Continually we were told that doing such "penance" was pleasing and brought happiness to God, Who looked down on our misery and suffering, and smiled His approval. Although this was hard to believe, heathens who know no better simply believe what they are taught. Never having read the Bible, we had no way to learn the truth.

Most of us were reared in Roman Catholic teachings and traditions and snatched away from family and friends at an early age. It took a while for the awful truth and scope of the deception to soak in. When it did, it produced atheists who hated anything associated with God or the saints.

Vicious hatred and violence then floods the disillusioned and embittered heart.

There was no bathtub in this convent, only a metal, horse watering tank and we were only permitted to have a bath when Mother Superior ordered it. Even when bathing I wore my scapular, although I shed all my other clothes. We were taught that the first Saturday after the death of a Roman Catholic the Virgin Mary descends into purgatory. Whoever she finds there wearing a scapular, she will release. I was bound by these and other religious fables and lies, but did not know any better. I was taught to accept as truth everything Mother Superior said.

In the convent there was a huge painting in a certain room which depicted all horrors of tormented men, women, children and even babies in the awful flames of purgatory. The agony and misery was so graphically portrayed that it actually seemed real. We were marched in on occasion to meditate on the tortures of the damned for a long period. After this session Mother Superior would address the nuns and say that they had better go and work another penance on their bodies, because those poor people were begging to escape the awful burning flames there.

There were many days when I would deliberately burn my own body and spill some more of my blood because of my conviction that as I suffered it would help these miserable people to be delivered. I often say that if the mass and purgatory were taken from the Roman Catholic system it would eliminate 90 of her income and she would starve to death. This evil Babylonian system drains both the living and the dead for funds to finance her cancerous spread throughout the world.

The nuns cells were bare except for a statue of the Virgin Mary holding an infant Jesus. As I dropped on the sharp wires which lined the prayer board and prostrated my arms on still other penetrating wire, I would pray earnestly for lost humanity. I had been taught that my suffering and bloodshed would help to save them. I believed that my poor old grandmother would be released sooner from purgatory (our family priest had assured us she went there at death) because of my sufferings. Often, in spite of the misery, I was spurred on to continue in this painful posture longer, fervently hoping to speed her release.

We were taught that for every drop of blood we shed in the convent we would have 100 days less to spend in purgatory. When nuns worked in the kitchen or other places underground they often wounded themselves to spill blood for this purpose. We had it hammered into our thinking that, as we spilled our own blood, as we whipped and lacerated our bodies, tortured and tormented them, we were gaining indulgence for ourselves

and others from purgatory. Remember there is no hope in a convent; nothing to look forward to except continuous pain, exhaustion, starvation and finally death. (Leviticus 19:28).

To those who have been taught the truth of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and know of the marvellous grace of God, it may seem incredible that anyone could be so deluded and ignorant. I remind you that if you had been taught nothing else all your life and, if as an impressionable child you had been spirited away to be brainwashed and finally imprisoned in a convent, you would not know any better either.

It took ten terrible years in the convent before I finally realized the awful truth that I had been duped. I was finally convinced that the Virgin Mary, Jesus, Joseph, St. Peter, and all the other saints were simply unfeeling metal, wood or plaster statues. It was a shock when I knew they could do nothing to answer all the fervent prayers poured out to them by faithful and deluded people all over the world.

It is surprising how tenacious my faith in all those false idols was. How long it took to really realize the bitter truth about them and the deception in which we had been snared. Bitterly, I came to believe that, if there was a God, He certainly either was dead or cared nothing about humanity. Oh, the hours I and others have spent in earnest, sobbing prayer at the feet of these dumb statues. (Jeremiah 10:19).

One regular monthly event we always dreaded was the visit of the father confessor to the convent. Each time it was a different priest but they were all basically the same. I hated going and always attempted to get in the back row. I lived in a convent so long that I would never trust any priest. All of the ones I met were rotten and vile. The ordeal of confession sometimes took all day. One by one the nuns had to file in to the room where the priest was waiting. Never did I see a priest in the convent who had not been drinking.

The room was bare except for the inevitable statue of the Virgin Mary. The priest perched in a straight-backed chair and the nun must come in and kneel before him. If she got out without being defiled and forced into some unspeakable depravity she was fortunate. No one ever interrupted the priest and the woman, no matter what transpired. One after another the nuns would enter and leave the room.

At other times it was not unusual for the Mother Superior to usher in a drunken priest who would pick out a nun and take her to a cell with him for more liquor and sex. The Mother Superior was a hard and carnal woman who had borne numbers of illegitimate children of priests and usually she drank with the visitors. The priest was well fed, healthy, and strong and

lived a relatively easy life; therefore a poor, weakened nun was no match for him, to fight him off. Because she was helpless, he did whatever he pleased and violated her any way he chose. There is no one to defend or help her and none to even care about her being forced into harlotry. Because Mother Superior locked the cell there was no way to escape.

Often I have nursed these little nuns after they had been brutalized and shamefully abused. Only the priest's imagination limited the kind of indignities he could inflict on his victim. I saw and experienced all kinds of sickening evidences of the wildest kinds of lust being exercised in the convents. The body of the nun often looked as if it were something to be thrown out to the hogs, covered with dozens of bruises and other marks. The people who say I exaggerate are either the priests, trying to squelch the truth, or those who have never been inside the convents. Because I was there, I know the truth, which is monstrous and shocking!

Can you imagine the terrible position of the nun confronted by the priest? If she displeased or refused him, he would complain to the Mother Superior. Putting their two evil minds together they would come up with things to do to that nun which normal minds would never imagine. In a day or two after she resisted the priest, Mother Superior would call her aside to do penance again. There was no choice and with sinking heart she would be led down into the dungeons where the awful reprisal dreamed up by the priest and Mother Superior would be executed.

Some mornings when we were preparing to go to work Mother Superior would call out ten or fifteen of us. We were trembling and apprehensive, never knowing what was coming. We were never allowed to question; only obey, like mindless machines. Would we be punished, go to the penance chambers or what? Then she abruptly would give the order for us to line up and remove all our clothes. With sinking hearts we did as we were told. We knew from experience what was coming next.

Half starved and marked with many scars, with shaved heads, we must have been a sorry sight. Because there are absolutely no mirrors allowed in a convent, I had no idea what I looked like for all the years of my incarceration. When I would catch scant, forbidden glances at others with their gaunt, drawn faces, sunken eyes, teeth falling out, and skeletal starved bodies, I could hardly imagine that I too looked like this.

On one occasion after we were stripped, three drunken, leering Catholic priests lurched in and eyes the nude girls lustfully and each chose a partner to go to a cell with him. Remember, these are cloistered convents and the priest is free to do anything he pleases behind the cloak of rotten religion. This same wicked whoremonger will return to his flock to say

mass and hear confessions of people he dupes into believing they can be absolved from their sins. Full of fornication, perversion and vice, he acts as their god!

Can you imagine what all these vile and hurtful abuses did to me? I had no idea that anyone could harbour such hatred, resentment and bitterness inside. In my mind, over and over I would plot and wish for the death of the Mother Superior and other tormentors. How I would relish these delicious thoughts of vengeance and hatred! The convent did this to me. I certainly was not like this when I entered.

After all the nuns had been broken to the will of the priests, they would become very angry if we resisted anything they wanted to do. Often we were slapped in the mouth by an irritated drunken priest. I had my own front teeth knocked loose from being punched in the face. Often we were thrown on the floor and kicked in the stomach. Being pregnant was no protection, for the priest knew that baby was going to be murdered anyway when it was born. Many babies are born in the convents because of the evil corruption of this foul system, cloaked in religious garments. No wonder Babylon is slated for complete destruction. She is unspeakably vile!

I saw scores of babies born in the convents. Most were abnormal and deformed and seldom was one normal. With my hands I have delivered many, many of them, therefore I know. With my eyes I have seen the horror of it all and the world must be told of what goes on in those chambers of horrors.

Many have said I exaggerate and that these things are not so, but I have yet to be hauled into court to refute the charges. They would have to open the cloisters and this they dare not do. After being snared in this rotten system for twenty-two years, I know whereof I speak.

Normal young expectant mothers eagerly anticipate the arrival of their precious baby. Everything is ready, nursery, crib, clothing, and everyone is happy with her. By contrast, a little nun in the convent dreads the moment when she gives birth. The child is the product of a shameful, illicit union with a drunken priest, which was forced on her. She knows from bitter experience that the baby will only be permitted to live four or five hours at the very most. It will never be cleaned or wrapped in a warm blanket for Mother Superior will put her hand over its mouth and pinch its nostrils to snuff out its life.

This is why there are lime pits in all the convents. Babies' bodies are tossed in these holes to be destroyed. Pray for the government to force the convents to open their doors to release the prisoners and let the whole world see what horrors are hidden behind those doors of cruel religious

hypocrisy.

If this happens, I assure you that even the Catholic people will agree to the closing of the convents as they did in Mexico in 1934. They have no idea what is transpiring there either, or they would never expose their daughters to such barbarious debauchery and torture.

The convents in old Mexico have been turned into government museums, which you can tour for a modest fee. You should go and see with your own eyes and touch with your hands the things of which I speak. Go down into the dungeons, through the tunnels and torture chambers and see all the fiendish devices, demonically conceived, to inflict suffering on the bodies of helpless nuns. See for yourself the cells in which nuns were locked each night and examine the beds, and the prayer boards.

This should give you a burden to pray for hundreds of precious little girls who have been deceived and enticed into entering these ungodly prisons for a life of suffering and utter despair by the Roman Catholic system. Remember I had a mother and father who loved me dearly. When they consented for me to enter the convent they had no idea that I was going to be subjected to such degradation. They were assured that this was the highest calling, the finest expression of their faith and love to God, to give a daughter to such service.

Sealed up in the convents until death, we would never be able to leave and let people outside know what actually takes place inside. With all communications cut off, we were beyond the protection of the law or loved ones and friends. There is no hopeless despair and black depression quite as smothering as that which seizes you when the realization of all this begins to sink in. To know that there is just no escape possible is maddening for there is no end or relief in sight.

Roman Catholics loudly proclaim that anyone can go into any open or closed order convent. There is an outside chapel and what is called the speak room. You are not even admitted there without an escort. If you were taking in food for a specific nun, typically you would walk up the front of the room and press a bell. This would activate a gate containing three shelves to swing open to receive your gifts for the nun inside. When the bell is tapped, you may be sure that Mother Superior is seated just behind the heavy black veil draped over the big iron gate guarding the inner part of the convent.

You will not be allowed to go any further but may speak to the Mother Superior through the veil. If you asked permission to speak to a specific nun, you might be permitted to converse with her, but only through the veil. If questions are asked as to her happiness, health, food, etc., the nun



always answers affirmatively. After all, Mother Superior is sitting there, monitoring every word.

If she were to complain or reveal any of the unpleasant details of life inside, there would be swift and harsh action to correct her as soon as the visitor left. There are good reasons for them to refuse to let relatives see the nuns in person. After a time on convent fare and treatment, the eyes are sunken in the head and the body so wasted away, pale and unhealthy that seeing all this would bring an indignant outcry.

Many were the nights I was extremely exhausted and badly in need of sleep, but ravenous hunger kept me from rest. Going to breakfast meant only a scrap of bread and a cup of black coffee which did not even take the edge off of that ever-present hunger. To those who have always had enough to eat it will be difficult to understand the plight of those who go to bed hungry every night. This is tragic in impoverished, backward nations. It becomes even more evil when you realize that what I am describing is deliberately planned and induced with cunning and devilish cruelty.

Remember that there is not a night or day when those little nuns imprisoned in the cloistered convents around the world do not go to bed hungry. They are sick, wounded, hurt, homesick, heartsick, discouraged and filled with despair. While we look to the Lord Jesus Christ for hope, these poor women have no hope. Release into a lost eternity is the best they can look for.

Occasionally I meet Roman Catholics who vow they have been inside the cloisters and that what I report is not true. You must remember that Catholics are quite free to lie to protect the church and need not even confess this in confessional. It is permissible, just as it is alright to steal up to \$40.00 before theft has to be confessed. (Exodus 20:15,16).

My fury toward the succession of Mother Superiors was unchecked. Each time she singled me out for penance or some real or imaginary infraction of convent rules she would sadistically inflict some diabolical and vicious suffering designed to destroy my body and mind. My mind was so filled with schemes of violence and retaliation I lived for the bitter day when I would be able to repay some of the misery I had endured.

All of this awful violence and hatred in me was created by the endless stream of cruelties, deprivations, harassments and unbelievable sufferings heaped on me by my captors. I often fantasized what a joy it would be to kill one of the brutal, lecherous priests who regularly violated us.

In my twenty-two years in the convent, I saw three Mother Superiors die. Because I was a nurse, one day two nuns came to fetch me to tend Mother Superior who was critically ill. A Roman Catholic doctor from the

outside had been called in to examine her. He gave me strict instructions concerning some powerful prescription medication he left for her. All of the hatred I held for this ungodly woman, her cruelty and the wicked system she represented boiled up in me. I would have my revenge, and this woman would die. I would see to that!

The day was long as I waited for my chance. The nuns were locked in their cells and the lights went out at 9:30. Time drug on until finally the midnight call to prayer was finished with the lights out for the night. I picked up a number of the tablets and dissolved them in water, a deliberate, massive overdose.

Eagerly, I roused the half-conscious woman and painstakingly forced her to gulp down every drop of the lethal potion. As I eased her back on the pillows I gloated. Soon she would die a horrible death and my vengeance on her would be sweet indeed. I checked her pulse, which was escalating rapidly, as was her respiration. In a short time she began to moan and toss and finally went into violent convulsions. I smiled evilly, for years of abuse had changed me into a bitter, heartless monster, bent on murder.

Suddenly I awoke to the realization of what I had done. With a shock I knew that I would probably be held accountable for her death. There was no way to imagine what they might do to me because of it. Frantically I grabbed a stomach pump and worked furiously to save her. I began massaging her with cold water. At long last her respiration and blood pressure dropped to normal levels and she drifted off into a deep sleep. I could relax again and reflect on my own narrow escape.

I knew that in a part of the deep tunnel system under the convent, there was a place where I had often heard horrible screams. They came from behind a heavy locked door. Mother Superior had repeatedly warned us not to go there. This was a rather pointless admonition since none of us had any keys, however my curiosity about the place was overwhelming.

With my patient finally out of danger and the convent asleep, I remembered. Mother Superior's keys were in her desk, so I grabbed them and raced downstairs. Two stories underground, by the flickering candlelight, I found the forbidden door, which I had wondered about. I fumbled nervously with the big ring of keys and finally found the right one. The huge door swung quietly open, revealing a hall lined with nineteen tiny cells. All had barred windows in the doors.

I gasped in horror as I peered inside the cells to see white, ravaged and drawn faces of little nuns with whom I had eaten, prayed and worked. Each had disappeared suddenly and without any explanation. One in particular I recognized and asked her how long she had been there and other questions.

Her dull, lifeless eyes were glazed with awful terror, but she would say nothing at all. Paralyzing fear rules the convent and these prisoners did not know where the Mother Superior might be hiding. None would speak lest worse things come upon them. I went from one to the other but always the response was the same, frightened silence.

Toward the end of the hall, several cells emitted a sickening stench and I became violently ill and nauseated when I peeped inside. All of the captives here had long chains wrapped around their waists, which prevented them from being able to sit or lie down. They were slumped in the chains, reeking with their own urine and body wastes, for they had been condemned to a slow death, with little water and no food. Some were already dead and the awful smell of death was there.

Their "crimes" consisted of persistent infractions of convent rules or they were unfortunate enough to have had a nervous or mental breakdown because of the pressure of the cloistered life. This was the way such matters were handled, a hidden garbage dump for the wreckage of the convent.

Violently ill, my head swimming and mind reeling, I staggered from the chamber of horrors and relocked the door. Hurriedly I went back upstairs to my charge, who was still sleeping peacefully. I was relieved to find that her blood pressure and respiration were still normal. She slept late into the next day and I remained with her for three more days.

Mother Superior felt so much better that I was rewarded with a six week assignment to kitchen duty. This was a rare privilege for it was on the first floor. Kitchen walls were lined with peep holes and there was no way to know when some nun or priest was peeping through them. With this constant surveillance, the slightest infraction of the rules, especially stealing food, could be discovered and dealt with quickly and harshly. This contributed to the overall sense of being in a hostile prison at all times. Still I was glad to be there.

There was a double locked outside door in the kitchen which opened onto the courtyard. On a landing by the door was the spot where we kept the garbage cans. On the third day of my assignment there, someone rattled a garbage can. The six of us were startled and jumped. When you work and live in an atmosphere where silence is constantly required, you become very sensitive to even ordinary sounds which others would never notice. We whirled around and saw a man who was replacing a full garbage can with an empty one over in the corner.

Quickly recovering our composure, we dropped our eyes and busily returned to our work, fearful that we might have been observed. We were

taught that the bodies of the priests and bishops were sanctified and holy. However, all other men were unsanctified and if we were caught looking at them we could receive severe punishment for this sin.

Suddenly my mind stirred with an exciting but dangerous idea. Perhaps I could smuggle a note to this man! This presented many problems however, I had no pencil or paper, for these were not allowed, but hanging over the work table in the kitchen was a pad with a pencil chained to it. This was used to list items running in short supply in the kitchen. I managed to snatch a scrap of dirty paper and at odd moments would scribble a few words on it with the pencil. By the end of the day I had only been able to write about two and a half lines, appealing for help.

I was terrified at the thought that I might have been noticed and reported. However, I had gone too far now to turn back. At the end of the work day, I slipped out to the garbage can, put the note on top of garbage, and left the lid off the can. I then removed my crucifix and, although it was difficult, I managed to break it and deposited it on the shelf.

After the kitchen chores were finished, we walked out and paused for our regular, daily inspection by Mother Superior. She carefully examined our skirts to be sure we were not smuggling out bits of food. When it was my turn I said, "Mother Superior, I broke my crucifix and put it on the shelf over the work table. May I go back and get it, please? She queried me about how it happened and finally crossly told me to go quickly and get it. After all, a nun could not be found without her crucifix!

I flew to the back door and looked under the garbage can where I had asked the man to leave a note. There was a piece of folded paper, a note! My hand shook so I could scarcely read it. My breath was coming in gasps, excitement mingled with fear. As I managed to make out the writing my heart really leaped, pounding so hard it seemed to thunder in my ears. It said he was leaving the outer kitchen door unlocked and also the big, barred, iron gate in the high wall around the convent!

Escape! I could hardly draw my breath as I cautiously tried the outer door. Sure enough, it swung open and I eased my foot out on to the cement stoop. Suddenly I froze, paralysed with fear, and grew dizzy with nausea. I leaped back inside.

I was remembering the dread sound of the buzzer which sounded the alarm when a nun attempted to escape. I also shuddered when I recalled how quickly the priests would capture the forlorn runaway and drag her back. Then began an endless round of penances and inhuman torments to bring repentance. Was I ready to risk all this?

I shivered, took a deep breath and stepped out once again, this time

closing and locking the door behind me. Now I could not turn back so I darted to the iron gate. Just beyond this was glorious freedom from the charnel house of horrors where I had been imprisoned for twenty-two long years! Freedom was worth any risk. Although I had despaired so often, I still longed for it. At last it was within my grasp, and overwhelming emotions swept over me as I raced to the gate.

I arrived at the iron gate and pulled gently. Raw terror knotted my stomach as I pulled and then jerked as hard as I could. It was locked! I sobbed silently and almost fainted when I remembered that I had foolishly snapped those kitchen door locks. I was locked out in a forbidden area with no excuse which would be acceptable. Panicking, I thought of all the tortures Mother Superior would use on me to break this "rebellion." I shook uncontrollably and my mind was spinning. Why, why was this gate locked?

In desperation I began climbing the high, wrought iron gate. We were kept half-starved and worked almost to death with heavy labour, to say nothing of the regular, draining bouts with the torture chamber. A frail, wasted body, little more than skin and bones, has no reserve energy. I slipped often, skinning hands and bare feet on the rough metal bars.

It was sheer misery, but finally, panting and bleeding, I clawed my way to the top ledge which was lined with long, sharp spikes. I paused, my lungs painfully strained by the exertion. My heart sank as I gazed down in dismay from the top of that twenty foot gate. I only hesitated a moment for there was not turning back possible now. I must go down the other side. Hindered by my three, long heavy skirts and knee-length veil, Awkwardly worked one foot between the spikes and decided to chance jumping.

I pulled my heavy clothing up over my head with one hand, took a deep breath, and leaped for the ground. Two of my skirts snagged on the gate spikes and I was suspended in the air and swung back against the gate. Now I was more afraid than ever and rocked frantically back and forth until I could get a fresh grip on the gate bars.

With my free hand I managed to pry loose two or three heavy snappers which fastened my skirts around me. Suddenly I plummeted down, hitting with a sickening, crunching thud and my skirts fluttered down upon me. Later I discovered I had an arm and shoulder with compound fractures.

Because I was so skinny, the shattered bones were exposed through the flesh. Waves of pain engulfed me and mercifully I swooned into unconsciousness. I don't know how long I lay there piled in a heap, but it was probably only briefly. After regaining consciousness, flashing pains seemed to be shooting all over my body, especially through my mangled

shoulder and arm.

I moaned softly, and, biting my lips, I struggled to my feet. The terror of being recaptured overcame bodily pain and drove me to stagger along as swiftly as I could. I was in a foreign country. Where could I go? What would I do? I was a wreck physically, I had no money, no friends and only the desire to be free kept me going on.

I walked, then ran, then walked again. Schooled to quietness in the convent, I kept thinking the rustling of the leaves behind me were the sounds of pursuit. Sheer exhaustion was making it increasingly difficult to keep moving for I was so nauseated, numb and sick.

I spotted a tiny storage building and painfully crawled in and tried to get some sleep. I must have been delirious and may have dozed a bit, but eventually I was hurting so badly I decided I might as well be moving on. I gasped with fresh pain and stiffness as I laboriously crawled out and walked the rest of the night.

With a determined effort I pushed myself to move away from my convent. One thing I had been forced to learn in the cloister was to continue to function in spite of agonizing pain and suffering. Miraculously, my escape was not discovered very quickly, and this gave me an advantage.

The second day I hid under a pile of boards and sheets of tin. The boiling sun baked my hiding place as I tossed and turned feverishly, attempting to snatch some rest for my drained and broken body. I was a mass of shooting pains, and was weak, thirsty and hungry. I probably lapsed into unconsciousness a number of times during that long, hot day. When night came I dragged myself out and managed to get moving again.

I was very fearful of knocking on doors of houses, lest some devout Roman Catholic family report me to a priest who would haul me back to the convent. The thought of this possibility forced my aching legs to take me deeper into the countryside, and hopefully to safety. I had decided that I would rather die than to return to my unmerciful tormentors and jailors.

By the third day I felt certain I was going to die. I had a high, raging fever, was horribly nauseated and my hand, arm and shoulder were swollen and throbbing. Even the ends of my fingers had now turned blue and green. Like a wounded, dying animal I crawled under a fence and despairingly burrowed into a haystack.

Most of the day I lay there but the combination of pain, hunger and thirst finally drove me out again. I came upon a small and obviously very poor home. Throwing caution to the winds, I knocked on the door. When a man answered, I croakingly begged him to give me a drink of water.

I must have been a frightful sight, but he said nothing. When he called to his wife, she immediately opened the door and brought me into the house. It was the first time I had seen real compassion in human eyes for years. Tears started in her eyes as she looked at me and said tenderly, "Come in and sit down here my dear." That was the most beautiful music I had ever heard.

She made me sit down at a table and rushed to fetch a cup of cool milk. Remember I had not even seen whole milk for years and I was ravenously hungry. Rudely, like a wild animal, I snatched the cup and greedily gulped down every drop. When it hit my gnawing, empty stomach, predictably I regurgitated it violently and made quite a mess. Automatically I recoiled and cringed, for I was conditioned to expect that each mistake had to bring recriminations and punishment.

The kind woman said nothing but tears glistened in her eyes as she cleaned up the mess. She understood what was needed and moments later had mixed some sugar in a cup of warm water. This time she fed me slowly with a teaspoon, a sip at a time. This revived me and tasted so good. Later she warmed some milk and gave me just a bit.

Deeply concerned, the man stared at my helpless, bloodstained arm lying on the table and asked how I had gotten hurt so badly. It is hard to express what a relief it was to talk with someone who genuinely seemed to care about me for a change. I explained how I had climbed over the gate and fallen to the ground.

When he announced that he would have to call a doctor, I went wild and bolted for the door. Hysterically I shrieked, "No! No! I have no family; I have no money; I cannot pay a doctor bill; I will run away; I must go now." This outburst had so drained me that I swayed dizzily, almost fainting from the exertion. The old man tenderly eased me back into the chair and soothingly reassured me. "Now, now, you need help and I must go for the doctor. However, you need have no fear for neither we or the doctor are Roman Catholic."

I so wanted to believe him but was still trembling violently with fear. I hoped they meant me no harm, but I had been conditioned to trust no one. For all those years in the convent I had been surrounded by treachery, deception and lies of all kinds.

Actually, I was much too sick and weak to do anything but settle back and wait. I had no choice for I had no strength and was quivering uncontrollably. The lady of the house moved so quickly to my side to calm me. It had been years and years since I had been shown any kindness or consideration. I just dissolved into gushing tears, for my nerves had been

thoroughly frayed by all I had endured. Both these strangers seemed to understand and were exceedingly kind to me.

The old gentleman hitched his horse to the buggy and drove nine or ten miles to the nearby town. A doctor came out in his car and after a cursory examination, shook his head very angrily. I was terrified and refused to tell them who I was or where I came from. I was afraid of everyone, dreading a betrayal which would return me to the prison house of the convent.

After the doctor examined me he kept walking around me, staring in utter unbelief. Gazing at the shattered hulk of what was supposed to be a human being, he swore softly and angrily under his breath until he noticed he was frightening me. He was furious, not with me, but with the inhuman treatment which had been inflicted upon me.

Gruffly, but kindly, he said, "I must put you in the hospital without delay." I began to protest weakly and sob that I did not want to go to a hospital. There, I was sure my enemies would find me and take me back. I pled with him not to force me to go. He replied that he was not going to hurt me but would have to take me where I could receive the treatment I required.

When he admitted me to the hospital I weighed in at 89 pounds (over 80 pounds under my 1968 weight). First I went into surgery where they attempted to reduce the awful swelling and infection in my arm, hand and shoulder. It was over two weeks before the swelling subsided and the bones began to knit. Because they were crooked, later they had to be rebroken and once again put in a cast, a very painful procedure.

The doctor and all the hospital personnel were extremely understanding and gave me the very best of care. After the many years of starving, torture, constant condemnation and being degraded and treated like an animal, it was almost too good to be true. I was there over a year, very slowly recuperating in body and mind. After six months my kind doctor friend walked in, pulled up a chair and took my hand. "Well girlie," he said, "We have done everything in our power to get you well and on your feet. Now we must know who you are and where you are from and I will try to locate your people."

He knew I was a foreigner and wanted to contact my parents. His kindness so touched me that I melted into tears and gave him the information. Ten weeks later he had finally located my parents. Both were living, but mother had been a paralysed invalid for over seven years. Of course I knew nothing of this for, as I discovered later, they had received none of my letters. My jailers did not allow any communication with outsiders.



Because I had undergone an operation for tuberculosis of the bone, I was unable to walk. When I recuperated enough to sit in a wheelchair, the doctor felt I needed to change from the hospital environment. He carried me to his home in the suburbs where his gracious wife bought me my first civilian shoes and clothing.

During all my time in the hospital the dear old couple, who had taken me into their home that dreadful night, visited regularly. Almost every day they came, bringing a bouquet of wild flowers to brighten my hospital room. I anticipated their trips to see me and eagerly watched for the little horse and buggy to come up the hospital drive. When the flowers quit blooming, she made blossoms from bits of colored paper to cheer me. I loved them as if they were my own flesh and blood.

The day I was released from the hospital they were there and asked if I would like to come to their home. I wept and said I would love to, but was going with the doctor to his house. When the doctor found me crying he quickly assured me that it would be all right to go there. He took me there in his automobile and visited me often, bringing fresh fruit and vegetables.

I stayed six weeks and then moved back to the physician's home. I went back and forth between these two families for about a year after leaving the hospital. Because my hair still refused to grow out, I wore dust caps.

The day came when I was recovered enough to gather eggs, dust furniture, wash and dry dishes. The doctor contacted the old people and gave them a cheque to take me shopping for a suitcase and clothing. On a certain day he came to take me on a trip. Many people had given me money which was carefully sewed in my clothing.

When my benefactor took me to the train, he cautioned me, "Charlotte, don't eat a bite of food or candy; touch nothing except what this one person gives to you for he will take care of you." After the train ride I was taken to a ship and put under the protection of another person with the same strict instructions and precautions. Two weeks later the ship docked in the United States. I was met at the dock by other people who put me on a train, under the care of the conductor. He was very good to me and brought me all the food I could eat. By now I didn't have a penny and he gave me some silver dollars.

I spent three days on the train and when we were twenty-five or thirty miles from my father's home I was quite excited. The conductor brought me a sandwich, two more silver dollars and helped me off the train with my suitcase. My hometown was very small but had grown considerably in twenty-four years. The train pulled away from the brand-new depot and I stood on the platform, feeling very alone, fearful and confused. I took a

deep breath, walked inside and asked a man for directions to my father's house.

I had been reared in a frame house, but this new one was brick. My heart was beating very fast and I was breathing heavily as I rang the bell. A stooped and wrinkled old gentleman with grey hair opened the door and I asked for my father. When he asked who I was, I gave him my real, not my convent name. Tears welled up in his eyes as he wonderingly and tremblingly said, "Hookie?" This was the nickname given to me when I was a little girl. We embraced, weeping for the joy of our reunion. When I asked about my mother, he became very evasive, asking me questions. When I kept pressing him he told me she had been very sick and finally took me to her room.

My mind reeled with shock to see her lying there, completely paralysed. Wasted away to a pitiful sixty-nine pounds, almost all her beautiful hair was gone. She looked like a frail skeleton and I could scarcely believe this pale, emaciated creature was all that remained of my beautiful, strong mother I remembered.

Waves of nausea and darkness swept over me as I almost collapsed in a faint. My dad gently steered me out and helped me into the next room where I crumpled into a bed, sobbing and soon I went fast asleep. The excitement of my homecoming coupled with the shock of seeing my parents, broken by age and sickness, was too much for me.

At 2:30 p.m. I awoke in severe pain. When my father had the nurse check me, she advised him to call the family doctor immediately. He was my godfather and had delivered me into the world and refused to believe I was really Charlotte until he saw the birthmark on my back. I was at once rushed to the hospital where I stayed for fourteen weeks. My father was a very wealthy man and paid all the bills. My godfather reimbursed those overseas who had befriended and aided me. Grateful to those who had saved my life, my dad also sent them gifts as well.

While hospitalised I underwent a second operation on my left hip because of the tubercular bone condition. When the ambulance brought me home I was placed in a reclining chair and my dad instructed me that I was to eat, sleep and recuperate. I was given books to read but try as I might I could retain nothing I read. I became extremely agitated and after two weeks of this my doctor called the family doctor and told him I was having a complete nervous breakdown and should be put in a sanatorium. My father refused, not wanting me to leave again after having been away for so long.

I was so thin, frail and hairless that my relatives would shuttle me

quickly to the back room, out of sight, when their friends would drop over. They were ashamed of the way I looked and this broke my heart and was a real source of grief to me. Because of this, I was very shy and extremely self-conscious.

All of my brothers and sisters had received college educations while I had been locked away in a foreign convent, praying for lost humanity, and pouring out my blood for the sins of the world. Somehow it did not seem fair.

After I was able to be up in a wheel chair and could walk a little, one of my sisters set up appointments with a beautician for scalp treatments. However, when they put hot towels and oil on my head I passed out, because I was so sick. Months of continued treatments were finally successful and one day the hair began to grow back. After I had become more presentable, my relatives began to purchase expensive clothing for me and I had to learn how to act, how to wear clothes, etc., all over again.

When I grew steadily worse, my Dad did eventually consent to my going cross-country over 600 miles, to stay with my Uncle John. For a year I lived there but still had very little hair on my head. This was a source of much shame and embarrassment to me and I became somewhat of a recluse. One day my uncle asked me to visit some neighbours with him but I bolted for my bedroom, fearful of being around other people. However, when I realized this hurt him, I changed my mind, dressed and went with him. A few days later, he asked me to pick up a package from these neighbours and for the first time I went out alone.

After walking a couple of blocks, I sensed something was wrong for someone was following me. When I whirled around, there were four big men close behind me. One called me by my convent name, warning me not to move nor make a sound. I was paralysed with that old terror so much that I could not move. They closed in quickly on each side; picked me up and pitched me into their car between the front and back seats.

As they sped away I was forced to lie on the floor and they covered me with a dirty rug when I begged for mercy. As I was held down under their feet and fear gripped me, I listened and realized that these were actually four Catholic priests in civilian clothing. We drove all night and through all the next day and night. The following morning we entered the suburbs of a large city and pulled to the curb. I was aching all over and cramped from being forced to lie prone on the floorboard during this wild drive.

I had no idea where we were but when I was allowed to sit up I slowly stretched my cramped muscles and aching back. I stiffened with horror when I saw we had parked in front of a convent. My heart sank and I shook

in terror. I wished I had not gotten up at all. Desperately I prayed to the Virgin Mary for a heart attack and then called on St. Jude, St. Bartholomew and every other patron saint I could remember.

They dragged me from the automobile, one on each side, and instead of entering the convent, they marched me blocks and blocks down the street. At last, walking on my toes with downcast eyes, I was guided upon the porch of the priest's home, next door to a large Roman Catholic church.

They hustled me inside, down a hallway, through the kitchen, and then down into the basement. There a secret, locked door opened to reveal a tunnel which led straight back, many blocks underground, to the convent! As usual, they had sneaked me in leaving no trail, in case we were observed. As always, they were out to deceive the world and hide their dark and evil deeds.

At the end of the long tunnel there was another door but no way to open it. However, one of the priests knew exactly where the secret button was located and when he pressed it, the big, heavy door swung silently open. Behind it Mother Superior stood waiting. Her cruel face was grim and set as she snapped, "Bring her in." I had seen those merciless looks many times before and it was like the rerun of a thousand other horrifying nightmares of pain and suffering.

Mother Superior led the way without a word to another room and harshly ordered me to prostrate myself on the floor. I had no choice but to obey, as I had so many hundred of times before. Mother Superior tapped a bell and two nuns suddenly appeared and one set a strange looking object on the floor beside me. She handed the sisters each a piece of rope and they bound my hands and feet securely. They were quiet efficient and obviously had much experience in doing this.

The object on the floor was a plumber's blow torch, but I had never seen one and did not know what it was. Mother gave a quick order and a nun lit it. One nun got under my shoulders, the other at my ankles, and they lifted me up. Mother Superior came and stood over me demanding that I say I was sorry for my wickedness, recant for running away from the convent, and promise I would never run away again.

I knew I would run away again at the first opportunity and would never make such a promise. From long experience I was aware that I faced hurt and torture no matter what I said or did not say. There was no mercy or escape regardless of promises. I was an old hand at understanding the duplicity, lies, hypocrisy and treachery in a convent. Everything was designed to deceive and entrap the unwary. There was absolutely no way to win a fair hearing or trial.

When a Mother Superior dies, they always have three or four replacements, one of which can take her place. Always they are chosen for their hard, cruel and inhuman disregard for suffering and misery and lack of compassion. She must have proven herself totally loyal to the system with all its rottenness and must even relish and enjoy all the gross practices.

Mother made her demands three times and I met them with grim silence. She gave the order to lower my body down on the torch. Naturally I screamed and struggled, bucking and pitching, trying to escape the merciless fire on my back. When my clothing caught fire I was writhing and shrieking in agony as the flesh sizzled and blistered while the relentless and emotionless sisters held me firmly over the fire. Finally Mother Superior decided I had burned enough for now and rolled me in a filthy rug to smother the flames. I was like a wild creature, throbbing with unbelievable white-hot pain and misery.

After she did this the nuns dumped me roughly to the floor and I screamed even louder as the seared and blistered flesh on my back slipped. I was then carried to the infirmary where I was laid out on a slab of wood. I was placed on my stomach because my back was so dreadfully seared. My agony and torment from the burns was beyond description. Mother and the nuns then walked out, shutting and locking the door. Once again I was a prisoner of those who had no hearts or conscience and who lived to inflict suffering and torture on every helpless victim.

I begged and wept, pleading and moaning for water when nuns passed by, but they were robots, programmed to ignore suffering and they did not stop. My cruel captors thought I was surely going to die and I believed it too. When I lived on, Mother Superior called in a doctor. I often wonder what kind of lies she told him to explain the horrible mass of burns on my ravaged body. He came in for several weeks to dress and treat the burns. One miserable day crawled into another.

Months dragged by before I was able to walk. The first day I was able to be up I was escorted to the refractory where meals were served. As was customary, each nun had her own place at the tables but there was none for me. Mother Superior ordered me to keep walking over to one corner of the room. There a shelf could be adjusted to the height of a nun and on it sat my tin cup of black coffee and four ounces of bread. I had to stand with my nose in the corner to consume my meagre rations.

When I was brought back that night the shelf was bare and Mother marched me to another place, past three statues. They had taken all my vegetables out of the tin pie pan and piled them on the floor with the two

ounce bit of bread and tin cup of coffee. I was to sit on the floor and eat off the floor and this was forced on me for months.

One day I asked permission to speak with Mother Superior. I told her that if she would not make me commit sin I would break no convent rules. She loftily informed me that if I kept all the rules, one day I would be allowed out in the courtyard for a short recreation period.

Years ago I had learned never to trust in or believe the lies told by the conscienceless Mother Superiors in convents. They were past masters of deception, manipulation and sadistic cruelty. This one long ago had told me that my life was to be one of constant penance and suffering because I had dared to attempt escape from the convent. Absolutely everything she was big enough to inflict on me, she did with a vengeance, not minding what it was. Hers was an all-out campaign to break me completely, and nothing was too cruel, painful or inhuman for her to devise.

One morning, for a penance, I was taken to a long metal horse-watering trough which served the nuns as a bathtub. I was ordered to strip off my clothes, slip on a muslin nightgown and get into the tub of water. Mother Superior seized my head and pushed my face forward into the filthy water, then up, then back into the water. I was scarcely able to get my breath and strangled as she kept this up continuously. I became so exhausted I crumpled in the tank, so weak I could no longer resist or even struggle against the fear of asphyxiation and drowning. The mental and physical pressures of such punishments are difficult to describe.

Two little nuns pulled me from the tank, limp and half-conscious, gasping, gagging and choking for breath. They held me firmly while two others began to beat me thoroughly with cruel, cutting, flagellation whips, whose chains and sharp metal teeth bit viciously through and shredded the thin wet muslin nightgown. I was soon soaked with my own blood, badly lacerated all over.

In the convent, complaining and murmuring are strictly forbidden and bring swift and harsh punishment. Therefore you learn to bear everything without hope of any relief. I had developed a festering infection on my finger which grew worse day by day. Terribly swollen and painful, it throbbed so I could ignore it no longer. It should have been lanced to relieve the pressure. That day I was assigned to kitchen duty and I knew that I would have my hands in hot, soapy water all day long, scrubbing and cleaning.

When I asked Mother Superior for permission to speak to her she glared at me but gave consent. Laying my finger on the kitchen work table for her to see, I explained how dreadfully painful it was and asked if I might

switch duties with another nun to keep it out of the water until it was better. She glanced at it and quick as a flash, snatched a meat cleaver and before I realized what was happening, savagely chopped off the side of the infected finger.

Although mercifully, unconsciousness caused me to slump to the floor, they quickly revived me. Mother Superior snapped at me angrily and said, "Now you quit fooling around making excuses and get busy scrubbing." I had no choice but to obey and slaved away in the hot, soapy water all day long, fainting several times from the endless pain.

So life went on, one dreary day after another, with dreadful and agonizing penances being imposed one after the other, limited only by the demonic imaginations and devices of the heartless and ruthless Mother Superior. These awful women have to be totally demon possessed to do what they do.

One day I was again taken down into the furnace room where the coal burner was located. It too was used as a torture chamber and as usual, my clothing was stripped to the waist. I was forced to lock my arms around a large hot water pipe and my hands and feet were tightly bound to it. Mother Superior then shoved the poker into the hot coals of the furnace to heat it red hot.

This done, she slowly and painstakingly burned three crosses on my back, returning the poker to the coals when it cooled. Horrible screams ripped from my throat and pitiful, whimpering pleas for mercy gurgled out once more, but of course there was none. My nostrils burned again with the sickening acrid stench of my own burning flesh. Awful convulsions of rage and pure hatred for my tormenters boiled up in me.

After over twenty-eight despairing, miserable months of captivity, these evil people had almost managed to destroy me for the second time. The utter hopelessness I experienced is very difficult to define or describe in words to one who has never gone through it.

Mother Superior summoned eighteen of us to follow her on another day. As usual, we were afraid for we never knew what awaited us when we were called out. Silently we trailed her as she led us to the kitchen on the first floor. Handing us seven beanbags she unlocked the door leading into the outer courtyard which lay behind the high walls. We were actually being allowed a recreation period!

We could scarcely contain our joy and amazement as we walked out into the fresh air and sunshine, for the first time. To those who have never been deprived of such ordinary things this may seem strange, but we walked only a few steps off the patio and fell eagerly on our faces in the

lush green grass, smelling and clutching it greedily.

To lie there in this way was like heaven, unbelievably wonderful and satisfying to our deprived senses which had been imprisoned inside the sterile convent walls and caverns for so long. We lay there side by side revelling in the air, grass and the sunshine and must have been a strange sight indeed. We were literally intoxicated by it all.

While lying there, a coal truck lumbered up to the heavy iron gate of the courtyard. A man took a wheelbarrow from the truck and began to load it. After unlocking the gate, he pushed it open to bring the coal to the basement chute around the corner of the building. We all lay quietly still after stealing hurried looks to see what was happening. Quickly we turned our heads away, for it was punishable sin to look on any man other than a priest or bishop.

A wild thought flashed through my mind. If I had what it took, I could dart out of the open gate ahead of him, as he was slowly making his repeated trips to the chute. Indecision paralysed me, however, and I could not move because I had been so conditioned by fear to obey the rules. He made several trips and finally pitched the wheelbarrow on the truck and closed the outer gate. My heart sank as I heard the sound of the gate swinging shut, however I started up. My hearing was so sensitive after being in the convent silence that it seemed the gate sounded different when it closed. Could it be that the catch jammed and did not lock? It was impossible, but supposing it were true?

With such thoughts surging through my brain, my heart seemed to be pounding so loudly that I glanced cautiously at the other nuns to see if they heard it. However, they were still luxuriating in the fresh green grass, the sunshine and fresh air and were noticing nothing. Very carefully I eased to my feet, moving quietly so as not to disturb them, and slipped over to the gate.

Furtively, I looked back to the convent to see if I was being observed. As I got closer, I panicked and began to run. When I hit the big gate it swung open so easily I lost my balance and tumbled headlong into the cinder path, skinning my face, hands, and knees. Quickly I leaped up and shoved the open gate closed and the spring lock clicked, locking it securely. I did not want to attract attention by running, but my feet just flew down the sidewalk.

It was incredible! I was free once more! I was outside the prison walls of the convent at last. It was a beautiful day but very windy, causing my habit and veil to blow around my face. I could scarcely see where I was going. Suddenly, I bumped into a man and in desperation I seized his arm and



gasped in a frightened voice, "Please help me! Hide me quickly. I have just escaped from the convent."

This frightened him and he looked shaken, but he said, "Come with me and I will put you in my barn." He had just put a load of fresh hay in the building and I began to climb up the ladder to hide in the loft. He stopped me, saying he had thought of a better place for me to stay. I followed him into his house where he quickly explained to his wife what was happening. They opened an access door in the corner of the kitchen ceiling and boosted me up there into the attic.

This precious couple, in their thirties, were very good to me. They sent up pillows, blankets food and water. I hid there all night and through the next day. At dusk I told them that I must be on my way, to flee in the darkness. From them, for the first time, I learned exactly where I had been imprisoned for over two years. They supplied me with maps, and, as we checked them, found that I had been kidnapped 650 miles away. The maps were then marked so I could find my way back to Uncle John's house.

The lady packed a shoebox with food, gave me seventy-five cents and insisted that I change into some of her clothing for the trip and carry mine along. I was still hairless so she gave me a stocking cap. I had to go barefooted for I had no shoes or socks, and my friends had nothing which would fit me. I was undoubtedly a peculiar sight, dressed in clothing three sizes too large for me, as I began my trek to safety trying to hitchhike cross-country.

I walked and walked until my feet were so sore and I was so tired I felt I could go no further. When I stopped at a house to ask permission to sleep on the porch or in the garage, the lady took one look at me and slammed the door in my face. Wearily I plodded back to the road, heartsick, frightened and thoroughly discouraged. Only the thought of the horrors behind me kept me from giving up completely.

These comfortable people, secure in their warm homes, comfortable beds with full stomachs could not relate in their wildest imaginations to what was going on so close by. The truth was too terrible to be believed, therefore nice people just deny it. Exhausted, I stumbled and half fell into the ditch until the lights in the house went out. I then crept out, slipped up alongside the house and lay down to fall into a fitful sleep. I was glad I brought along my heavy, holy habit because I wrapped it around me to keep out the biting night chill.

When dawn broke, I nervously roused myself and again began to walk. I was filled with fear because I didn't know what the people might do to me. After I had eaten everything I brought with me, I stopped and begged

food along the way. Some were gracious and gave me a nice meal, others abruptly refused and slammed the door in my face.

Days and weeks went by as I painfully walked across the countryside. No one offered me shoes and my feet got so bad I wept and begged to die. For fourteen weeks I walked and hitchhiked, begging for food and a place to lie down to sleep. Finally I was about twenty-five or thirty miles from Uncle John's, according to my maps.

I asked at a railway depot if there was a train to Uncle John's town and discovered there was a one-car train which would come in five hours. From the meagre store of coins which had been given to me, I counted out money, bought a ticket and lay down on the station bench to sleep. Although I was very hungry, no one offered me food.

I caught the train and when I arrived at Uncle John's house he said, "My God, Charlotte, where did you come from?" Then he showed me a letter from my dad stating that my own father was the one who had put me back into the convent. The letter said I was in safekeeping and that they knew where I was. My father was terrified because my invalid mother was so sick. Every time any member of the family, especially my father, went to confession, the priest would solemnly announce, "There will be no absolution for your sin until Charlotte is back in the convent."

The priest assured my dad that if my mother died she could not go to purgatory but would have to go straight to hell. My tormented father believed this and desperately feared this dread sentence on his beloved wife. To him, betraying me to the convent was not as bad as condemning my mother to hell. As I heard this, I was again filled with wrath and furiously assured my uncle I never wanted to see my father again. I was raging, deeply hurt and felt terribly lonely.

Uncle John began to share with me about how his Roman Catholic neighbours had gotten saved. This had radically changed their lives, especially the father, who had been a wife and child-beating drunkard. When my aunt died, they showed such concern and love to my uncle that he visited a Pentecostal church service with them. At 67 years of age my Roman Catholic uncle had never attended a church other than the Roman Catholic. He was deeply touched by the services and particularly by their clean-cut young people who were so different from the worldly Roman Catholic young people he knew.

After several visits to the church, one night he leaped from his seat and ran to the front of the church shouting, "My God, I'm lost, I'm lost, I'm lost!" He was a well-known local businessman and it created quite a stir when he was saved. Later he received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. A

childless widower, he promised to give himself and all his property to the Lord.

As he finished this strange narrative, I was thinking the old man must have gone crazy. However, I had no other place to go, so I just said nothing. That night I overheard him praying for me, and again the next morning. Each time he was asking the Lord to save me. This went on nightly and for the rest of his life.

Because I was so ill, my uncle put me in the hospital, paid my bills, took care of me, fed and clothed me. After I came home, my uncle became very sick and his doctor said he needed to be in the hospital. I begged the physician to let me keep my relative home and nurse him. It was my chance to repay him for his kindness to me. The doctor consented, however he steadily got worse and worse.

In a few days my uncle called me in and said, "Honey, I'm going home to be with the Lord. I want you to call your father and tell him that my funeral will be in this church here." He told me which undertaker to call and also mentioned what he wanted done at the funeral. I was stunned, scarcely believing what I was hearing. He smiled, looked in my face, then closed his eyes and he was gone.

When I realized he was dead, I was wracked with waves of awful grief. This man was all I had in life. All my precarious security was swept away. I was lost, and had been betrayed by everyone except this man. I felt I had been robbed of all I held dear and precious in this world. I fell across his lifeless body screaming furiously and hysterically, "If there is a God, why, why did you take him away from me? He's all I have. It's not fair! It's not fair."

I finally pulled myself together and began to carry out my uncle's instructions. I called the pastor; the undertaker; picked out the casket; sent telegrams and made all of the funeral arrangements. Uncle John never told his relatives that he had left the Roman Catholic church because he knew they would cut him off. Sure enough, when they learned this, not one single relative came to the funeral or sent flowers. People from the church knew of my deep attachment to my uncle and some stayed with me in the house for six weeks. When they had to go home, I was told to charge anything I needed at the grocery store and they paid every bill.

Seven months after Uncle John's death I begged the doctor to release me to go back to work. I hated being dependent and was anxious to assume responsibility for myself. I went to the neighbouring state and took and passed a nurse's examination. In a matter of days I had been hired by a large Roman Catholic hospital to nurse. In spite of all of Uncle John's

fervent praying and witnessing, I was still unsaved.

For three years I worked there and was able to support myself. What a glorious feeling after being sick and dependent on others for so long. An Assembly of God woman preacher came in for major surgery and I was assigned to be her special nurse. Following her operation she awoke praising the Lord for sparing her life and asked me to read aloud from the Bible. I began to shake all over for, as a Roman Catholic nun, I was never allowed to read the Bible. Nevertheless I read to her daily for the ten days while she was hospitalised. I was assigned to nurse her at home also.

When she was able, I accompanied her to a church downtown. I had been taught that all non-Catholics were heretics; therefore I only sat at the edge. Because I went each night, my employer gave me a Bible of my own. At the house I got in the habit of going down in the basement to read. Finally I dropped to my knees and said, "If there is a God, I want you to show me." Many nights I would read the Bible until the wee hours of the morning.

One night I dreamed about falling into the lake of fire and awoke screaming. My employer assured me God was trying to show me I was lost and needed to ask Jesus in my heart and be saved from all my sins. I dropped down on my knees and begged God not to let me die before I got saved.

I went to church one night, so under conviction that I was miserable. The preacher got up to read his text but I could bear it no longer. Leaping from my seat I raced to the altar sobbing and crying out repeatedly, "I don't want to go to hell! Oh God, have mercy on me, I don't want to go to hell!" I fell in a heap at the front and there I wept as I confessed all my rotten sins, my hatreds, bitterness, evil thoughts and deeds. I poured it all out, not caring who heard me.

What a refreshing and what a cleansing, as I asked for and received forgiveness. The Lord Jesus came into my heart and gave me salvation, full and free. Only those who have experienced being born again, being redeemed out of the hand of the enemy by the blood of Jesus Christ, can understand the supernatural glory, relief and joy which flooded my being that wonderful night.

My friend took me to the telegraph office where I sent a wire to my dad notifying him that I was no longer a Roman Catholic, for I had been gloriously saved by repenting of my sins and receiving Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour.

Three days later, sitting in my window at home, I looked up as a car screeched to a halt out front. My father and two Roman Catholic priests

got out and came up the walk. Frightened, I ran quickly to the kitchen and told my friend that they were coming after me. She calmly told me to go to the door and invite them in. Because I was saved, she said there was nothing to fear.

I did as she said and ushered them into the living room. Dad immediately blurted out, "Charlotte, we're come to take you home." Incredulously I answered, "Dad, I'm not going home with you. I'm staying right here and will continue to attend the church where I found salvation. I want to learn more about God and the gospel of Jesus Christ." They had actually thought I was still the same mechanical robot I had been brainwashed to become in the convent!

My father looked distraught and said, "Charlotte, we've driven over 650 miles to come and take you home where you belong." After I again told my dad very firmly that, under no circumstances was I going to return with them, the older of the two priests leaped to his feet. He shouted furiously at me, "Of course, you know what you have done! You've damned your soul and you'll spend eternity in hell. One day you'll crawl back to the Holy Roman Catholic church on your hands and knees and beg for novenas to be said for you. One day you'll want to come to the confessional box and receive absolution for your horrible sins."

I had had enough of his raving and threatening. I thrust my Bible out in front of him and challenged him. "If you can show me one scripture in the Holy Bible where God says I am to go to a man to confess my sins, I'll get down on my knees beside you now and crawl back to a Roman Catholic Church!"

His face turned red as he sputtered in a towering rage, snatched the Bible from my hand and threw it to the floor. He slammed his foot on my beautiful Bible and spun around with all his weight, ripping it to pieces, breaking the binding. If he had put his foot on my face, I doubt that it would have hurt half as much as witnessing this. Through this Bible I had found the truth, and assurance of salvation.

If the Roman Catholic priests had the power, they would lead a house-to-house canvas, seize all the Bibles, soak them with gasoline and burn them all. When they come into power Bibles will not be permitted.

The priest began to pronounce all of the curses of the Roman Catholic excommunication upon me because I had worn a holy habit and dared to take it off. First he cursed my eyes, that they would rot and fall out of my head. I wept hysterically and fearfully, for as yet I did not know very much that the Bible teaches. When I escaped the convent I only had 4 percent vision in my left eye and eight percent in my right eye. I was practically

blind because of the vicious treatment I received at the hands of the demonically driven Mother Superior; therefore this curse frightened me.

Next the priest cursed every vital organ in my body and commanded that maggots devour these organs. He droned on, "By the authority of God Almighty, the Father; the Son and the Holy Ghost, and of the holy canons and of all the undefiled; the Virgin Mary, Mother of God; and of all the apostles, evangelists and holy innocents, who in the sight of the Lamb are found worthy to sing the new canticles; and of all the holy martyrs and holy confessors; and all the holy handmaidens (those are the nuns and sisters) of the Lord, and of all the saints together with the elect of God; we excommunicate Charlotte from the threshold of the Roman Catholic Church; that she be tormented with eternal suffering forever, and that the fire which burns will never be quenched.

"May God the Father who created man, curse her; the Son of God who suffered for man, curse her; may the Holy Ghost Who was given us in baptism, curse her; may the holy cross which Christ descended triumphant over His enemies, curse her; may the Holy Mother of God, the perpetual Virgin Mary, curse her; may Saint Michael, Keeper of holy souls, curse her; may all the angels, the archangels, the principalities and powers and all the heavenly armies, curse her; may the praiseworthy rank of patriarchs and prophets, curse her; may Saint John the forerunner and baptiser of Christ and Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Saint Andrew and all of Christ's apostles, together with the other disciples, even the four Evangelists, who by their preaching converted the entire world, curse her."

"May the marchers and confessors, which by their good deeds are found pleasing to God, curse her. May the choirs of the holy handmaidens of the Lord, (nuns and sisters) who for the honour of Christ renounced as reprehensible the vanities of the world, curse her. May all of the saints who from the beginning of the world to the everlasting ages are found to be beloved of God, curse her. May the heavens and the earth and all the holy things remaining therein, curse her.

May she be cursed wherever she goes, whether it is in the house, whether she is in the field, whether she is in the roadway, whether she is in the path, whether she is in the woods, whether she is in the water, or whether she is in the church; may she be cursed in living, may she be cursed in eating, may she be cursed in drinking, in being hungry, in being thirsty, in fasting, in sleeping, in drowsing, in being awake, in walking, in standing, in sitting, in lying, in working, in resting."

All this was spoken in Latin and some statements were so filthy it is not decent even to repeat them. Of course, all of this comes straight from the

pits of hell. The other more filthy parts, omitted here, were easily mouthed by a Roman Catholic priest in his "holy" habit.

The curse continued: "May she be cursed in all the faculties of her body; may she be cursed inwardly and outwardly; may she be cursed in the hairs of her head; may she be cursed in her brains; may she be cursed in the crown of her head; in her temples, in her forehead; in her ears; in her eyebrows; in her cheeks; in her jawbones; in her nostrils; in her teeth, both the biters and the grinders; in her lips; in her throat; in her wrists; in her arms; in her hand; in her fingers; in her breasts; in her heart and all the interior parts down to the very stomach; in the kidneys; in the groin; in the thighs; in the hips; in the knees; in the legs; in the feet; and in her tonsils."

"May she be cursed from the top of her head to the soles of her feet; let there be no soundness found in her; may Christ, the Son of the living God, curse her with all of the might of His holy office (this hurt me more than all the rest.)"

During all this tirade of cursing and denunciations, my poor father stood like a pale and tight-lipped statue. He was completely bound by the traditions, darkness, superstition, illiteracy and illegitimacy of Roman Catholicism. When the priest finished his horrible condemnation, I was shaking with fear and sobbing hysterically. Remember, I was just a babe in Christ and still had to be delivered of the terrible fears instilled by years of agony and pressure in the Roman Catholic system.

It was in 1946 when my father walked out the door with those two priests and I was left with a broken heart. I was numb, in a state of emotional shock, but went with my patient to a revival meeting that night. The message was on believers water baptism. This was all new to me, therefore I went to the pastor and requested a list of all the scriptures on water baptism.

I wanted to know the truth for I had come out of such gross error and needed to be sure of what the Bible taught. When we came home I went directly to the basement to search the scriptures and prayed that the Lord open my understanding. Through the night I studied and prayed, and by morning I knew I must be baptized in water as the scriptures taught.

The following night I went to church and was later baptized in the icy waters of the Mississippi River. As I came up out of the water, many infirmities, sicknesses and pains were miraculously removed from my body.

Later, at the church I learned about the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Again I requested and received a list of scriptures on this teaching. I plunged into another session of study in the basement to learn what God's word taught.

Seven priests showed up at the home to bluff, stare at and threaten me. I cried all day long after they left until my face was swollen and eyes bloodshot. I was learning how strong and tenacious the old soul ties to a demonic religious system could be. Keep in mind that I was caught in this religious snare from birth and was soaked through and through with the power which energizes the wicked system.

I almost did not attend church that night, but went anyway. The sermon topic was the crucifixion of Christ and this repulsed me. I wanted to wait outside in the car, but the lady with whom I stayed urged me to come inside. To me, the cross was what I had learned to dread and hate.

Horrifying memories of the ghastly tortures, torment, abuse and suffering were associated with that rough, blood-soaked cross in convent torture chambers. How many times had I cringed and groaned after flagellation with whips as Mother Superior forced the cruel metal crown of thorns on my scarred, bald head. Then loaded with a rough-hewn, heavy, eight foot cross dropped on my frail, lacerated back, I had to drag it, staggering across the room, until I collapsed. I was so weak I could never get very far.

There was another horror chamber two stories underground in the convent where several times I was forced to lie on the dirt floor in the form of a cross, without moving, for three days and three nights without food or water. During this time all the priests and nuns were there with Mother Superior and they repeatedly walked back and forth across my body. This painful and humiliating trial was supposed to teach me humility and submission and crush out pride. No wonder I shuddered and recoiled from hearing about the cross.

However, as I listened to the Biblical message on the meaning of the cross, it took on a whole new aspect. I was caught up in the awe as scriptures regarding it were expounded. By the time we got to the part where the Roman soldier pierced His side, I wept with real understanding of the bloody sacrifice Jesus had made for me. During the invitation I fell to my knees and asked for the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Although I had always been very conscious about my haggard looks and lack of hair, this night at the church I did not care about my hair, dress or anything else. I ended up stretched out on that dirty floor weeping for over an hour. Many, many ungodly things came out of me during that time of heart searching. God dealt deeply with me as I laid my entire family on the altar, my brother, the ordained priest; my parents, sisters and other brothers. I asked the Lord to save them at any cost.

Once again, upon arrival at home, I went down in the basement to spend



the time alone with the Lord. There I danced all night before the Lord. The next morning when the lady of the house came down to check on me she asked if I was hungry but I had lost my natural appetite. Each time I tried to answer her I spoke in tongues and could not speak English. For two days and nights this continued and I promised Jesus I would go anywhere He would send me to testify of His glory.

Three days before the revival meeting closed I was handed a telegram stating my father had died and gave the time of his funeral. My father disinherited me when I refused to go home with him and the two priests. I was afraid to go to the funeral and it was nearly seven hundred miles away, however I did send some flowers.

My mother had her personal banker set aside \$12,000 of her own money for me when she learned that my father had cut me out of his will. I didn't even know she had any money and when her attorney contacted me about it I wept happily. With these funds I was able to buy a used car and a new cloth coat and I banked the rest.

Before she left town, Sister Nila, the young Pentecostal evangelist, invited me to come to see her if I was ever in Chicago. I told Sister Nila I planned to run an ad to sell my furniture and everything else in the apartment. The first morning two priests came, not to buy, but to harass. I had to threaten to call the police to get them to leave. The next morning another priest showed up, heckling and trying to frighten this ex-nun who had publicly gone to a Pentecostal altar.

I hired a woman to stay in my apartment until all was sold. I packed up and moved to a large hotel nearby. Here I knew the owner personally and gave orders to let no one come to my room. I could come to the lobby to see any visitors.

One morning the phone rang and I was told that three people had come to see me. When I came down, there stood my brother, the priest, dressed in his holy habit, with two of my sisters. The women turned their backs to me but he strode across the lobby towards me.

My mother had died from a stroke two weeks before. Furiously he spat at me, "I guess you know what you did." He proceeded to belittle me and told me I was damned forever (because I had run to the feet of Jesus) and I would certainly burn in hell forever for this.

He further stated that I had sent my mother to an early grave. Imagine, my mother who had been a complete invalid for seven long years while I was imprisoned in a foreign convent! He raved on and made many nasty, hurtful statements and wild charges. After he had vented his spleen on me, he turned to walk away.

I caught him by the arm and said, "Now wait just a minute, Chet. How many women have you destroyed in the confessional box? I know about the priests who go to homes when the husbands are away." He flushed angrily and glared at me with hatred in his eyes. I continued, "Chet, have you ever been in a convent? Did you ever rob a little sister of her virtue?"

He hissed curses under his breath, lunged for me and struck me viciously with his fist. He was over six feet tall, a big man, so I got a black eye and a huge knot on my head when he knocked me down. The man behind the desk witnessed the attack and leaped to my defence. He said terrible things to my brother and ordered him to get out of the hotel and never return.

I put my car and coat in a storage and caught a train to Chicago. There I found a hotel room near the meeting where Sister Nila was working. I went every night and then, at her invitation, went with her to visit her family. From there we went to a meeting in Wisconsin.

Several days later, an attorney called telling me that a member of my family was suing me for all the money my mother had left to me. After a wrangle with lawyers and courts, they took all the money and my car and coat. I wept at the greediness and unfairness of it all, but it actually drew me closer to the Lord. I accepted Sister Nila's invitation to travel with her for the next thirty months.

It was after I returned to the place where Sister Nila was in revival I received a telegram. My youngest sister asked me to return home because my dad was asking for me. Remember, earlier, I had wired a funeral wreath for him because they notified me that he had died, so this was a shock. My family deliberately led me to believe he was already dead. When I arrived, my sister told me that my dad was still alive, in his eighties, very independent and well off financially.

I was apprehensive about how he would react to me. However, when I saw him he grabbed and hugged me, saying, "Hookie, you look wonderful." He was leaving on a trip to see his other children, but I was very happy for our reunion.

After he returned two months later, he wired me to come back to see him. When Sister Nila and I visited him, he asked my forgiveness for all the family had done to me. His heart was definitely softening toward me, but he still did not want my God.

Later, when we arrived on the West coast, I prayed until God gave me grace to call my brother, the Catholic priest. He then asked that I forgive him for striking me at the hotel. Late that night we drove twelve miles to his home, where he was waiting on the front steps. Dashing to the car, he

grabbed and held me, asking anxiously, "Oh, Charlotte, have you forgiven me?" I assured him that I had.

I learned that for seven years he had lived in adultery with his housekeeper. As he heard confessions from his parishioners, he felt increasingly guilty and hypocritical. At last, he notified the pope that he was leaving the Roman Catholic church and the priesthood. A bishop came to urge him to retire to a South American monastery to reflect on and reconsider his decision, but he refused.

Six months after his excommunication he married his mistress. One day while browsing in a second hand bookstore he purchased a King James Bible. Through reading it, both he and his wife were brought to salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.

He took me to see my sister Connie, who immediately said, "I don't want anything you have. I'm a Roman Catholic, and I'll die a Roman Catholic." She pushed me away. Eighteen months later she was taken to the hospital for a double goiter operation. Her vocal chords were severed, destroying her voice box and she went blind in both eyes. Six weeks later arthritis struck, twisting both her hands and feet. Medical doctors helped to straighten her feet but she still could not walk or talk. A therapist worked with her a year to teach her how to speak again. I gave her a Bible which she quickly destroyed.

She heard of an eye doctor in Mexico and went to him. A series of operations restored her sight but she still refused to repent and seek the Lord. In 1964, she awoke with terrible pains and they removed a sizeable growth from the large intestine. Within ten days she was back home, but would not turn to God. Two years went by and she was again seized with awful pains. This time tests revealed cancer scattered throughout her entire body.

In desperation and fear she called me to come and pray for her healing. I went to her and advised her to ask God for forgiveness and prepare to meet Him, for she was surely going to die. Her weeping family was gathered around her and she cries out in terror, "Oh no! I'm so afraid, I'm afraid, won't someone please help me, I'm so afraid!" She knew she was dying and dropped into eternity crying out in despair and fear. How tragic to have refused the Lord's mercy so many times. Six weeks after the funeral, her husband went to a small church and cried out to the Lord, was saved and filled with the Holy Spirit also.

Over the years I had received many hate letters from my family and each time I received another one and read it I would become terribly upset. Finally I stopped opening them and stored them in a box located in a safe.

Four years passed and I received another letter from my youngest sister. This one I felt I should open and read. She was critically ill and said that she believed if I would come home she would get well. She asked my forgiveness for all the harsh and derogatory letters she had previously written to me.

At their house my brother-in-law and niece came out to meet me and it was obvious that he was broken and his heart was tender. He swept me into a close embrace, lifting me from the ground as we both wept for joy. He had diagnosed her trouble as inoperable stomach cancer and there was no hope.

My sister, a petite, five-foot woman, could keep nothing on her stomach and looked very gaunt and wasted. I assured her that God wanted to save and heal her and she need not die. We took her to Brother William Branham's meetings in Vandalia.

I was up all night with my poor suffering sister. Finally we got her into the prayer line where many miracles of healing were being performed in the name of the Lord Jesus. When she received prayer, she dropped to the ground, weeping loudly. Anxiously I asked what was wrong and she sobbed, "Oh, Charlotte, God has healed me, God has healed me!"

She was hungry and we went to a restaurant to eat. She ate a good big meal, had a wonderful night's sleep and awoke with no trace of her former pain or sickness.

When we arrived back home, her husband had difficulty believing that the miracle had actually been accomplished. However, when the doctor made fresh x-rays, he announced, "Your wife is well from the top of her head to the soles of her feet. A greater power than I has healed her." Weeks later my sister and her husband were saved and became workers in a local church.

I went to visit my father when he was 93 years old. He told me that if I was going to church he wanted to go with me. Three weeks earlier he had completely lost his eyesight for the second time. After we returned from the services we were sitting in the living room when he began to tremble all over. I quickly dropped to my knees beside his chair and talked with him about receiving Christ as Saviour. I read scripture showing that Jesus alone could give absolution for sin, not the priests or the catholic hierarchy. He fell to his knees and sobbed many tears as he followed me in the sinner's prayer, asking Jesus Christ to save him and forgive his sins. Then he wept for joy saying he had never felt so wonderful in all his life. I was going to baptize him in the bathtub but my two brothers walked in and stopped me.

My brother John, lying in a bed dying with leukaemia, told me he was a Roman Catholic and would die a Roman Catholic. I was with him praying when he slipped out into a Christless eternity. My older brother later left the Roman Catholic church and began to attend an evangelical church and accepted Christ as Saviour. He wrote me, encouraging me to continue giving my testimony and saying he was praying for me.

My older sister lies crippled with Parkinson's disease in a Hollywood hospital and is dying with hardening of the arteries. She too is a staunch and determined Roman Catholic, totally closed to the gospel message of salvation.

While Sister Nila and I were ministering to Roman Catholics in Quebec, my eyesight, already poor, gave way completely. I could no longer read my Bible or even my watch. As we swung back through Maine and into Boston I stopped to see an eye specialist whom my father had used to fit me with glasses years before. I told him I was losing all my vision so he ran tests and shook his head and said he could do nothing to help me. I was going blind and I so needed to read and study the Word.

We went to a meeting and had prayer for my eyes. I just knew God was working a miracle when the clock on a distant wall suddenly came into focus. Excitedly, I took a Bible and opened it, and sure enough, I read it easily. There was great rejoicing and praise to the Lord Jesus that day I can tell you!

On our return trip I once more stopped to see the eye doctor and asked him to examine me once more. Imagine his shock when I was able to easily read the fine print on the bottom of his charts instead of the large block printed letters at the top. Because of this, later he went to church and sought and received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Since I was saved in 1946, I have daily prayed for God to move upon the Roman Catholic Bishops, the Pope, prelates, priests, nuns and people. They all desperately need the touch of the Lord in their lives and the saving blood of Jesus Christ to wash away their sins. They labour under a terrible yoke of deception, delusion, darkness and religious works, never suspecting the liberating truths we know, of life in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Today I can still burst into praise when I recall my wonderful salvation and deliverance from unbelievable demonic bondage. Thank God, there are no more Roman Catholic priests in my life; no more confessional boxes; no more worship of and prayer to the Virgin Mary and all the other "saints;" no more wafer god.

Thank God! No more purgatory (the only purgatory the Catholics face is the priest's pocket.) In the United States, November is purgatory month

and during this period priests collect nearly \$22,000,000.00 saying masses for the dead. Many have paid regularly for twenty or twenty-five years of masses and are told their loved ones are still not in heaven. This terrible doctrine will force the faithful to pay and pay and pay indefinitely to secure their release. It is one of the cruellest religious hoaxes ever dreamed up by the demons to be foisted off on human victims. The awful bondage and fear generated by this false teaching is incredible.

No more scapulars, thank God! Every priest, bishop, every nun in open or closed orders and all prelates of the Roman Catholic Church wear them. It is a dirty piece of brown cloth with a hole in the middle of the top. Your head goes through the hole and the scapular falls to the front and back. From the time I entered a convent I wore one constantly. Even after escaping from the overseas convent and returning to the United States I still wore the scapular.

The night I heard the gospel and ran to the feet of Jesus for salvation I was still wearing it. I raced home, undressed, ripped off the scapular and burned it. I no longer needed that relic of past bondage and darkness for I knew I now belonged to the family of God and His royal blood flowed through my veins!

No more holy water! This was supposed to keep away all evil spirits and was stored in the convents by the barrel. Following priests' visits in the buildings, Mother Superior would give six or eight nuns bottles of the holy water with orders to sprinkle it everywhere the priests had walked, just in case they had brought some evil spirits in with them.

No more prostrating and blowing to dumb idols in prayer and supplication! God only knows how many hours I spent and how many gallons of tears I wasted at the feet of idols when I walked in the heathen darkness of religion without reality. Now I bow my knees only to the lovely Son of God, my Saviour, Jesus Christ. To Him be all glory, honour and praise, now and evermore.

*The End*



