

Faith, Resurrection and Forgiveness; The Culture of Life

Immaculee hid with seven other women in a small cramped room while men from neighboring villages swarmed the streets slaughtering her family and friends. The year was 1994, and members of the Hutus, the majority tribe in Rwanda, were intent on killing every member of the minority Tutsi tribe. They were retaliating for the murder of their president Juvenal Habyarimana who died when his plane was shot down. The cruelty and savagery of the attacks was horrifying as the Hutus hacked men, women, and children to death with machetes and hoes, sometimes killing the mother and leaving her baby to die in the street.

While listening to the sounds of the massacre, Immaculee swore she would escape someday and kill every Hutu she could find. But as she prayed the words “and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive others” began to ring hollow and she doubted the existence of a God. From the carnage, hate and doubt comes one of the most amazing stories of faith, resurrection, and forgiveness ever told. Immaculee has become an internationally regarded speaker and travels the globe sharing her amazing story.

Why is it that God in His master plan puts one life, the life we know as Immaculee, in one place and time in our world, and us in another time and place? What she faced was unfathomable. Hopefully, we will never experience the horror and hardship she faced. For me that is a question that needs to be asked, and Lent is the time to seek that calm quiet space and contemplate the purpose for which the Lord has called me and the progress I have made.

Lent is also a time to remember that Our Lord came to us in human form. He became like us, in every way but sin. He felt the cold and heat and rain. He felt the pressures and disappointments of life. He knew He was to suffer and die a humiliating death on the cross, and He was aware of the impending pain and suffering that would require. Sometimes I believe God puts others in our lives to share their story of fear, pain, and forgiveness so we can better understand the suffering He experienced after He was captured and made ready to die on the cross.

This year our Lenten journey can be enhanced by a special event Friday and Saturday March 19th and 20th in Billings. We will have the opportunity to hear Immaculee tell her story at the “Affirming the Culture of Life” conference at St Bernard Parish in Billings on Saturday. The conference, sponsored by the Diocese of Helena and the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings, starts on Friday March 19th at 7:00pm and concludes Saturday at 4:30pm. It also features Trish Short, an internationally acclaimed pro-life speaker and singer and nationally known Christian recording artist Michael Bethea. Camille De Blasi Pauley, President and co-founder of Healing the Culture will share with us how she inspired politicians, judges, lawyers, and medical professionals to defend life.

This powerful lineup of Christian messengers is one of the best I have seen together on one program. Registrations are very reasonable, \$30 for adults and \$15 for students (plus \$5 for a Saturday meal). Make plans now, and do not miss this event. We are blessed to have them with us as we make our Lenten journey.

Registration is available online at www.doceseofgfb.org or call (406) 294-3557 for additional information.