

MY FAITH JOURNEY

AVES, ARIANNE LOIS, F.

The COVID-19 pandemic was undeniably a challenging time for the entire world, but in the midst of the trials and uncertainty, it became a blessing in disguise for my family and me. Before the pandemic, we were already facing difficult times—emotional struggles, financial worries, and moments of feeling disconnected. Yet, as the world around us shut down, our family found a sense of unity that had eluded us for so long. The pandemic forced us to slow down and, as we spent more time together, we did our best to support each other. It was in those quiet moments, huddled together at home, that we truly began to grow stronger as a family, leaning on each other in ways we hadn't before.

As time passed and we navigated the challenges of lockdowns and restrictions, we were further blessed with the arrival of a beautiful baby boy. Being the youngest in the family and someone who has always had a deep love for children, this was a gift that touched my heart in ways words cannot describe. For as long as I can remember, I had dreamed of being an older sister, offering guidance and love, but now, I was being called "Aunt." That title brought me so much joy, not only because of my love for children but also because I saw the happiness it brought to my sister. Watching her embrace motherhood and witnessing the bond she shared with her baby boy filled me with an overwhelming sense of gratitude. It was a reminder that, even amidst a world of hardship, blessings can still emerge.

Seeing my sister happy with her baby, knowing that we were all sharing in this new blessing together, reminded me of how precious life is and how much we should cherish each moment. It filled our hearts with joy and reaffirmed the importance of family. The fact that this all happened during such a difficult time reinforced a powerful truth: no matter how dark or stormy the clouds may seem, there is always a rainbow after the rain. This was our family's rainbow, shining brightly amidst the challenges we faced, reminding us that joy often comes when we least expect it, especially in the most trying of times.

I believe that this experience mirrors the promise we find in the Bible. In Romans 8:28, it says, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." The pandemic was a time of great uncertainty and fear, yet it became a period of growth, love, and unexpected blessings for our family. God's hand was evident in every step of our journey, guiding us through the hardest moments and showering us with grace when we needed it the most.

As I reflect on these past years, I realize how much this experience has shaped my understanding of faith and resilience. Life may not always go according to our plans, and challenges will arise when we least expect them, but we must remember that God works in mysterious ways. The hardships of the pandemic, though painful at times, ultimately brought us closer, and in return, we were given the greatest gift—a new life that symbolizes hope, joy, and the love that binds us together. This journey has taught me to trust that, even in the darkest moments, there is always a promise of light and a new beginning on the horizon.

Through it all, my faith has grown stronger, my family has become more united, and my heart is full of gratitude for the blessings that have come into our lives. It is a reminder that, no matter what life may throw our way, there is always beauty to be found if we choose to see it.