

LED BY FAITH

by
Immaculee Ilibagiza

STUDY

GUIDE

“Behind every story of true love, there is a story of great patience.” The Christus Center

“Thank you for breathing new life into my heart, Lord. Keep it clean, free from hatred, and always willing to forgive.” Immaculee

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Thank you for participating in this book study. The attached page includes chapter reviews along with chapter reflection questions. This review was created to be a conversation starter for others to add their own personal thoughts as well. Each page ends with an optional scripture passage. It is great to begin and close a group discussion with prayer. Please feel free to use your favorite prayer, spontaneous prayer, have the group participate in personal petitions, or use the prayers below. If you need more assistance or would like to give any feedback please contact Sherry at RCIA@christcatholic.com or call 320-333-9315.

The Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

The Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you;
blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning
is now, and ever shall be
world without end.
Amen.

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If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you. Matthew 17:20

“Faith is the strength by which a shattered world shall emerge into the light.” Helen Keller

Chapter 1: Left to Tell

The idea for this book came to light as Immaculee yearns for help from her mother to care for her sick child Nikki. Immaculee realizes her children will meet her loved ones killed during the genocide through the story she will tell. Immaculee's story tells how profound tragedy when led by faith can lead to forgiveness.

Chapter 2: Walking Through the Ruins

Prayers are answered and the healing begins. Suffering was everywhere amid the memories of how things used to be. It was during deep despair Immaculee realized God is always with her, especially when she needs Him most.

Chapter 3: Mother Mary

Ninety-one days in hiding revealed an inner spiritual peace, a gateway to God. There was no greater freedom than the one found through prayer. Immaculee prays to the Blessed Mother to bring back that spiritual peace and closeness to God. Mary brought Immaculee to The Christus Center.

Chapter 4: Peace and Prayer

Immaculee weeps hysterically over what she had lost. She prays for God to show her how she can serve Him during this difficult time. Immaculee meets Father Bugingo who tells her how God needs her strength to help others with love.

Chapter 5: The Power of Unconditional Love

Immaculee remembers Damascene's unconditional love. Damascene appears in a dream to tell Immaculee not to be sad, her family is alive and they will see her soon. Immaculee's cousin Ganza tells her about Home of Hope, the Mother Teresa Orphanage.

Chapter 6: A New Type of Heartache

Immaculee goes to meet her friend Jeanette to find she has died from the inside out. This feels like punishment. God becomes the only unchanging constant in Immaculee's life.

Reflection Questions Chapters 1-6:

- Describe a time God uses someone to answer prayer or reveal His plan for you.
- In what ways do you experience unconditional love?
- In what ways do you experience joy from serving others?
- When has the experience of great loss brought you to God?

As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. John 15:9-11

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Chapter 7: Exiles, Exodus, and Killers Across the Water

Immaculee was asked “why are you alive”? She answered, “God protected me with the power of His love”. Hatred continued to destroy many people. Immaculee prayed to be an instrument of peace. Immaculee said “we can’t hate everybody, or the hatred will never end. God forsakes no one if you open your heart and ask for His forgiveness.”

Chapter 8: Looking for Miracles

While visiting Dorothee in Nairobi, Immaculee learns how God finds ways to tickle us, even in the depths of despair. When we are open to even the smallest of miracles it can sustain our faith and help us survive. With faith and patience miracles do happen.

Chapter 9: A Dream Comes True

Mr. Mehu helps Immaculee get a job at the United Nations. With a salary she was able to help her aunts and cousins find a home, and send money to her brother Aimable. Overjoyed to share the wealth, Immaculee also purchased 200 crayons for the orphans.

Chapter 10: Office Politics

Mr. Mehu watching over Immaculee ends too soon. Adama and his family in Paris become Immaculee’s new support system. Immaculee helps DeeDee out of an unhealthy relationship. As Immaculee grows professionally her appearance changes. Despite how others see her, Immaculee’s clean and pure heart brings her peace.

Chapter 11: Office Predators

Immaculee is beset by the wickedness of Mr. E, a powerful UN official. With confidence and courage she declines Mr. E’s offer declaring how she is already rich with God. A very intense situation ended well.

Chapter 12: John Returns

John and Immaculee’s relationship does not survive the genocide. The genocide changes everyone’s sense of priorities in the chaos that follows. Forgiveness is necessary even when we cannot forget. Immaculee prays for peace to be led by justice not vengeance. The truth sets them both free to begin to heal.

Reflection Questions Chapters 7-12:

- Have you ever felt protected by the power of God’s love?
- The smallest miracles sustain our faith. When has faith and patience revealed a miracle in your life?
- In what ways do you give to support others in need out of what you worked to earn.
- When in your life has a clean and pure heart brought you peace?
- When have you experienced being able to forgive but not forget?
- Share a time in our life the truth sets you free to begin a healing process.

Psalm: 55:23

Cast your care upon the LORD, who will give you support.
He will never allow the righteous to stumble.

Understanding all is forgiving all. Mother Teresa

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Chapter 13: An Army of Love

Immaculee imagines what could be done with an army fighting with love not guns. She creates a project at the orphanage as 100 volunteers change the lives of 200 orphans. Immaculee says to the volunteers “it has to come from the heart to make a difference.”

Chapter 14: Bees and Blessings

Immaculee meets Bryan. After an argument she has a vision of bees, remembering a tragic encounter with bees her mother saves her life. There is a need to accept hurt and disappointments in life as nobody is perfect. The wedding miraculously comes together with all needed to make the perfect day.

Chapter 15: Time to Leave

After three years the genocide killing continues. Immaculee receives dangerous attention after sharing her story with a reporter. The danger increases after the wedding and Immaculee leaves her homeland as the nation's nightmare appears to be repeating.

Chapter 16: In America

New York is as different from Rwanda as could be imagined. Neighbors act differently but Immaculee meets Smith who also recognizes how purchasing things doesn't make you happy. Teaching Immaculee about prejudices in America is something she thought she had moved away from. Ultimately the evil bigotry plagues all parts of our world. Following church bells brings joy along with Nikeisha's birth.

Chapter 17: The world Hears My Story

Six years of memories, what she felt, heard, touched, smelled, and perceived, welled up as if reliving every moment. Immaculee finds words describing how God's love envelopes her story. Immaculee finds Dr. Wayne Dyer to share her story of how God taught her to forgive. Hearing her story in her voice he knows this story of faith belongs to all of us.

Reflection Questions Chapters 13-17:

- What would you do with an army fighting with love vs. weapons?
- What hurt or disappointments have you learned to accept in your life?
- Describe a time you had to leave a comfortable home for a new environment.
- Is there a tragic memory in your life that seems very real each time you remember?
- Have you ever experienced hearing someone's story in their voice? What makes that possible?

Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle.
Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God,
thrust into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits,
who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.