

A Narrow Escape

I never passed a moment without praying, "Holy Mother, let Japan win!" So I was willing to give up studying in order to serve our country as a mobilized student in the Greater East Asian War. My daily dress was a khaki uniform with head and arm bands on which were written, "Mobilized Student of Junshin High School". I always held a rosary in one hand as I worked, passing each day working and praying for our country.

On August 9, I was at my work place in the Ohashi Factory of the Mitsubishi Company when the Bomb was dropped. With the impact I fainted and on regaining consciousness I was temporarily deaf and blind, and totally disoriented. I could feel people moving about me; I moved with them as best I could. When we came to the remains of a thicket of woods, I collapsed on the trunk of a charred tree to rest until my sight returned fully.

I was up on a small hill and all below me was a sea of flames which were ravaging the buildings of the university. I could only think that this must surely be the end of the world, for the scene was just as the Bible described it. And so taking my rosary from my pocket, I prayed to our Lady that she might intercede with Almighty God and that He might be merciful to me.

Later hearing a train whistle, I moved down the hill to join other refugees who were heading toward the railroad tracks. I wanted to go to Junshin to inform the Sisters that I had survived. But feeling that I could not make it that far, I followed the tracks as far as Michino. On the way I met a friend and we both took shelter in one of the few houses still standing. While resting there I spotted a neighbor passing by and asked him to inform my parents that I was safe.

The following morning my family came and brought me home. I still felt fairly fit and was able to get to the air raid shelter by myself whenever the alarm sounded. However, from the eleventh, I became very sick, frequently vomiting and lapsing into unconsciousness. I lost my appetite, my temperature rose to forty degrees, and my hair began to fall out. On the twenty second I fell into a comatose state and became delirious. I was bedridden until the end of October. Then when I could get up I stumbled and fumbled my way around like a baby, holding on to things for support. Finally came the joyful day when I could walk unaided. And on November 1, I was able to make my way to church and attend Mass. At that Mass, as I have done ever since, I have prayed for

those who died, and thanked God and our Blessed Mother for my life.

Sr. Epiphany Yamasaki