

Standing Strong

Mary Khoury

17 years old

Damour, Lebanon

During the Lebanese civil war, 1975-1992

Mary Khoury and her family were forced to their knees before their home. The leader of the Muslim fanatics who had raided their village waved his pistol carelessly before their faces. His hatred for Christians burned in his eyes. "If you do not become a Muslim," he threatened, "you will be shot."

Mary knew Jesus didn't have to die either, but He chose the cross. So Mary said, "I was baptized as a Christian and His word came to me: 'Don't deny your faith.' I will obey Him. Go ahead and shoot." The report of a gun from behind her echoed in the valley and Mary's body fell limply to the ground.

Two days later, the Red Cross came into her village. Of all her family, Mary was the only one still alive. But the bullet had cut her spinal cord, leaving both her arms paralyzed. They were stretched out from her body and bent at the elbows, reminiscent of Jesus at His crucifixion. She could do nothing with them.

More words from the Lord came to Mary. Even though she was now handicapped, she knew God had a plan for her life.

"Everyone has a vocation," she said. "I can never marry or do any physical work. So I will offer my life for Muslims, like the one who cut my father's throat, cursed my mother and stabbed her, and then tried to kill me. My life will be a prayer for them." ¹

¹ *Jesus Freak Youth Devotional*, (publisher and date is unknown), p 80.