

Transcript of Oral History Interview with “Merinda”

Interviewee: “Merinda”

Interviewer: Calla Allen

Date: 04/01/2020

Location (Interviewee): unknown

Location (Interviewer): unknown

Transcription Equipment: Otter.ai

Interview Technology: Zoom-recording

Abstract: Calla interviews “Merinda” about how COVID-19 has affected her religion and practice/observance. From REL101

Calla Allen 00:00

First question that I have for you is how has COVID-19 affected your faith and or beliefs?

"Merinda" 00:06

Whoa, well, there you go. That's a good light question to start with, um, it has. I would like to say, you know, anyone would like to say they have a pretty strong faith to start, you know, in life like, yeah, my faiths great.

Calla Allen 00:20

Yeah.

"Merinda" 00:21

Um, but I think with COVID, it was it was definitely that that test of faith, if that makes sense. So, my mom personally got it and so there was a lot of faith in the way that I couldn't see her in the hospital for three weeks. Yeah. And so, my faith in the Lord, just like knowing that I could lose my mom at certain points, was definitely that tested, if that makes sense. And just because I knew, um, how has it been affected? It's been strengthened, I guess is the best way to say it that I definitely feel more, I feel like the Lord has heard me and I think, thankfully, again, like my, my mom now is better and at home. But even before that, it's just like COVID has the Lord's taken away a lot of distractions with work, and people and events and all that so that you can just spend time with him. And especially when my mom was in the hospital, I didn't have sight for anything besides that in the way of like, let's worship the Lord and pray because I had no control. I have no control; I couldn't do anything. And I felt at a loss, except that I knew that God had it in control. So, my faith and belief has been strengthened and the way that God has a plan, and I'm encouraged, and I know that there's obviously not everyone gets a happy ending. And that came, you know, I had faith with that. And I still knew that the Lord would never leave me or forsake me in that time, whether it be difficult or not.

Calla Allen 01:45

That's so cool. Well, I like that. So just to go off that just really quick. Like, I think it's really cool. So your mom obviously had COVID. And she was in the hospital? What I liked, what you said, is that, like, you had no control because you couldn't even see her.

"Merinda" 02:03

Right.

Calla Allen 02:04

And so that strengthened it, whereas I think, like some people would give up. Right? And you didn't, and you just saw it, you God you have this.

"Merinda" 02:13

Yeah.

Calla Allen 02:14

That's so cool.

"Merinda" 02:14

And it was that release too. Because like, if you know that she will hold on to this, what's gonna happen this worry, and it's like, terror. And I had that like, a little a little bit.

Calla Allen 02:24

Sure, Yeah.

"Merinda" 02:25

You know, without losing someone or change or difference, but over overwhelmingly had a an unexplainable amount of peace in the way of like, it's gonna be okay, no matter what happens, I obviously have a desired outcome,

Calla Allen 02:39

Right.

"Merinda" 02:40

But I know that the God has a plan greater than I can imagine. Even if that means having pain and suffering and a time he uses that for better growth. You know?

Calla Allen 02:52

That's, I just think that's really cool. Um, second question is less personal? Um, is, is your religious community still gathering? How has COVID-19 affected your participation in your religious community?

"Merinda" 03:06

Yeah, so um, I go to church every week. Love the Lord. Amen. Hallelujah.

Calla Allen 03:12

Amen.

"Merinda" 03:12

Um, and so we, it was weird, because we went to online streaming. So, we do that every Sunday, we will live stream it together, hopefully with most of our church body. So that's been encouraging to know that we're all watching something at the same time. So that's been different, just so I am a part of that religious community, but what's also been cool, is that part of our sermon series in this time has been how the church is more than a building. And especially with my mom in the hospital, I've been able to experience my church family in the way of social media, like support, and we've gotten so many messages and pictures and verses and encouragement in a way that I hadn't really experienced before.

Calla Allen 03:53

That's cool.

"Merinda" 03:55

Yeah, it was super cool. And so, and I still feel that in the way, like, I know, that people like our church is real, you know, it's a family. It is a family of believers. And I've experienced that more, I think, in the way of potentially having that time of need. But we're all have a time of need. And it's been cool to see people loving in that time. So, my religious community, super solid.

Calla Allen 04:17

Yay. Um, oh, yeah. Okay. And then last, is your religious community supplying or engaged in, in any kind of community services, and it's an attempt to help alleviate issues caused by the pandemic? If so, what are the efforts?

"Merinda" 04:41

I am not too aware of most things. I know that individuals are doing different things within our in our church body I know there's been a lot of people that have been affected by COVID with the actual sickness of it or quarantine and can't get groceries. And there has been like a group kind of established to help like, "Oh, we can go get groceries for you. Or if you need anything like, we'll go get it for you." And that wasn't just personally for our family, but for those in the church.

Calla Allen 05:05

Right.

"Merinda" 05:06

I know, our pastor called us a couple different times saying, Do you need anything? Can we support you? What can we do? And thankfully, again, just a blessing is that we we've been supported with other friends and family. And so we didn't have to, like, you know, take up too much of that but it was cool to know that people were were there for us, and just that listening as well, you know, so for community efforts, I think one of the biggest things is not meeting I think, is a service that I mean, yes, right now, there's the state issue, you know, you're not supposed to have large gatherings.

Calla Allen 05:39

Right.

"Merinda" 05:39

But we're not pushing that boundary and the way that we are respecting that and the health of our community and again, that encouragement to take care of your neighbors, you know, so it may not be an organized initiative, but it's that encouragement for just the our church members to see the people in their lives so that they can help.

Calla Allen 05:59

That's cool. So, no official thing.

"Merinda" 06:02

To my knowledge, there's no.

Calla Allen 06:05

I'm not aware of anything in a way Yeah.