

Story of Faith: Janet Carmichael

According to Hebrews 11:1, Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. We need faith.

Growing up in a colony in South America, I was an ardent member of a Presbyterian Church, where my grandfather, with whom I lived, was pastor. At seven, I sang with the Church Choir. No! That was not a special privilege! I actually had a singing voice! I recall singing Handel's Hallelujah Chorus at age eight, during the church's celebration of its fiftieth anniversary—much to the amazement of the congregation that day.

The vocal arts accompanied me into adulthood: Singing with several church and community choirs wherever I lived, training elementary school choirs, singing solos, and receiving two medals from the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. Soon I was training the Choral and Theatrical Groups of a large corporation, and holding classes in Speech Training at the Teachers Training College in Georgetown.

Then suddenly one day, without warning, I had no voice! The sounds that escaped from my vocal cords were different, the pain agonizing. Was this as an end to all that I enjoyed so much? Is the Good Lord telling me something?

My young children, of course, reveled in the fact that I could only get their attention by clapping my hands.

When nearby doctors couldn't help, arrangements were made to see a specialist in New York, and away we went. The medication prescribed was the easy part! The frightening part was having to be completely quiet for three weeks. No talking, NO SINGING! AND NO WHISPERING! A large notebook became my only means of communicating. For me, that was a time of alienation that now bears a stark resemblance to this present one!

Finally, following instructions, I tentatively made my first vocal sounds— eight singing notes—without pain! Several such cautionary attempts followed, accompanied by some new advice about voice care.

At last, I was singing, talking, training again. This time, no longer taking my voice for granted, but paying total attention to its care.

In Isaiah 43: 1-7, we learn that God does not promise there will be no trouble, no threat, or no trials in life. As we go through life's difficulties, we must remember that He is continually with us, who believe in Him.