



Peggy Rosa

Hi. My story begins in this community as a child. Growing up here in New Bedford was the best time of my life. If anything, more importantly, is probably the Christmas holiday. I could remember it as if it were vivid yesterday. Downtown, it was snowing, and there were theaters down there, and you could go in the middle of the street as you can now. I'm so thankful that they opened it up because everything was lit up. The street was a glow with lights. People were all around. I've never seen so many people out. And, if anything, you could drive down the streets of New Bedford and every house on every street was lit up. It was a joy. It was a wonder to see. And even in my own home, my mom always made sure that, as a child we had... We weren't rich, but we weren't that poor. But we always had a toy under that tree.

And if anything, we always had these beautiful Christmas trees that were lit up. We actually had two. My mom would put one in the home and one was always in the window and it lit up. And it had these, what you wouldn't know now, but a little wheel that gave colors off of the Christmas tree. It was a sight to see and it was so beautiful.

And then, as a child, we could run outside and go play in the snow. And boy, did we get snow back then. What we get around here is a couple of inches, but back in the day, it was feet of snow that we would put on our snow clothes and then just go out there and have ourselves a great old time. It was just joyous.

And then, if anything, it was all about family. We actually celebrated and had dinners together. We had Thanksgiving. We'd go see the aunts and uncles, and it was wonderful. It was the best time of my life. And then, as I grew older, didn't have any children of my own, but I do have a ton of nieces and nephews that I take care of. And I try to bring on that same tradition to make sure that we're all together. It's all about family.

And then, again, my community, it's all about faith as well and my church, which I'm going to name as OLOA. If it weren't for that church and my faith in the church, then I don't know where I would be today. I am blessed to be able to be a member of this community and that they welcomed me in because I didn't grow up Catholic. I actually grew up Protestant. Although my mom was Protestant and my dad was Catholic, but we probably went to Protestant and Nazarene churches when I was a child my mom made sure we always went to a church. But then, as I grew older, and a lot of my friends were coming to the Catholic church and I felt comfortable here.

So then I decided a little later in life to switch over and join the Catholic community. And I will say, at that time, it was a difficult time for me because I had a lot of losses back then. And at one point, it was probably me looking to cancel and not come to church and not take on becoming a Catholic because of how I was feeling, and probably mainly because I lost my mom at that time, and a couple of aunts, and then a really dear friend. But if it weren't for the catechist of OLOA, it came to my home and talked to me and made me feel that I could do this journey and make a change in my life, that I did.

And it was on that day that I walked down that aisle and then saw my catechist at the end, all smiling and happy that I completed my journey. But the journey wasn't an easy one because every time I read a passage in the Bible, it actually reminded me of my life experience, which wasn't good at that time because of the losses. And I didn't know if I wanted to continue. But as I was reading it, and they really helped me interpret the passages in the Bible and told me to tell my story and what it actually meant to me, it really helped me as a person, even today.

So I'm going to say that this community, my church, OLOA, is a blessing in my life. It gave me meaning. It gave me purpose. I think this community is strong with its values. Back then, it's like you weren't just one person's child, you were everyone's child and they looked out for you. So I don't know what I would've done if I didn't grow up here. It is a great place to be. I love the water. It's joyous.



And I'm going to say, probably right now, that's my story. My life growing up in this community, that I wouldn't have wanted to grow up any place else. It was prosperous. It was family. It meant faith. It meant community. And for me, that was a blessing in my life. And I will be eternally grateful to this area. Thank you for listening. And that's my story.