"I chose you before I gave you life, and before you were born I selected you" (Jeremiah 1:5)

On 31 January 1991, I was born in Amchit, in a Catholic family that consists of a father, mother and 3 children. My family is fully committed in the church. The commitment of our family influenced me to participate in the community of Friends of the Eucharist, the parish choir, Committee of religious education, Committee of liturgy, Mariam Apostolic Movement, and the Community Faith and Light which takes care of Handicapped people. In this atmosphere I grew up in body, graces and wisdom. All I asked is God alone, which nothing is sufficient except him, and nothing is firm that I can attach myself to and rely on.

I studied in St Joseph – Jbeil for the Sisters of the Holy Family. One day, I was told about a spiritual retreat in the Convent of Holy Family in Ebrie, under the title: "My vocation is a precious pearl, how can I find it?" I participated in the retreat, and through it, I was earnestly asking from God to give me a listening ear, an open heart, a prepared will, and a vivified faith, in order to listen to the Holy Spirit and to be free from all worldly things. At the end of the retreat, I got an answer for my questions, when the teacher of the Novitiate Sister Marie-Antoinette Saade stood next to tabernacle of the Eucharist and said: "Every person has a precious pearl, and a day comes to find that pearl. We have found it, Jesus Christ" and she opened the tabernacle. At this moment, I felt everything has stopped around me; all that drew my attention was the Eucharist. I felt that Jesus was calling me saying: "Walk with me, Come to me, Go forward, Go forward, do not be afraid, Walk not on your feet, but with love".

After I returned home, I continued spending my whole time in the parish. I kept myself between God's hands, in order to guide my path in whatever and however ways God wants. After I finished my studies, I entered different faculties and chose different specialties, but I didn't feel the joy and peace that I felt when I was in the Convent of Holy Family and in church. Then, I found myself deciding to enter the convent, I told my parents on Eve Sunday 12 December 2010, that I'm going to continue my life with the one who my heart loves. Despite their opposition, I kept the words of Jesus in front of me : " Anyone who leaves home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will receive much more in this present age and eternal life in the age to come" (Luke 18:29-30).
I packed my bags, and said goodbye to my parents who filled the house with tears, and hoped to live the monastic life with holiness.

I was so touched by the words of St Therese of the child Jesus: "Love is to give all what we have and to give ourselves". I gave myself fully to the Lord and entered the convent on the morning Monday 13 December 2010. I regained my happiness which the world in its wealth and temptations has failed to give, and I found my love in which I became alone in the seclusion of the spirit, where no one can interrupt the speech of love between us. I talk to him and he talks to me with happiness that has no end.

On 12 June 2011, I entered the Postulant, saying with Samuel: "You called me, so Here I am" (1 Samuel 3/5). Yes, Here I am for you Oh lord, today, tomorrow, and in every hour from the hours of my life. Here I am discovering day after day, the beauty of living next to the lord and in the lap of the Holy Family. I desire, by the example of Holy Family, to knit my life with the everlasting yes, and all I need is the delight of my love.

I entered the Novitiate in 15 August 2011, repeating the words of our father founder: "God is the only one that stays, God is trust-worthy in his love and never leaves us... I don't care except to work in his delight, and to stay united with him in all circumstances, in good times and bad times, in distress and joy, where nothing separates me from his love. In him, I rely you are all that I need".

Sister Cynthia Abi Issi