

## SERATA DEI GIOVANI

### *Testimony of Róbert Proszenyák, the Hungarian coordinator of the Father's Prayer Community, on the Youth evening*

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I am Róbert Proszenyák, 48, a believer, Catholic, husband, father (with 5+1 kids). But this wasn't always the case. One near-death experience changed everything. I would like to talk about this to you.

I was 23, after college. I had been working for a year at a trendy advertising agency. I believed primarily in myself. I was not baptised, but I was searching. It meant everything, from reincarnation, through mind control, to new age craziness. I had a beautiful and intelligent girlfriend who was a believer. I saw first in her faith that there existed some true and living reality. That being a believer is not the drug of the weak or the self-justification of the losers. And that faith is a very intimate and personal relationship. As I was not a typical example candidate for being a good husband my girlfriend asked for a sign from the Lord, so that he would show her whether I had been the real partner for life for her. So she prayed for a sign that was given to me.

Because of the new job I had no time for sport, so I was out of shape. But I took part in a company marathon running. I woke late that day. So I did not eat or drink anything and I started my run late already in hot weather. So I took part in a trial which I was not prepared for. And I literally stumbled. Stumbled over the finish line. Because I can't remember anything. Others said that I had handed over the baton before I fainted. Then the ambulance came, took me to the hospital. I was unconscious for two hours in a glucose coma.

During this time I experienced death and damnation, I went to hell.

First it was only an audio experience. I was lying on a bed, unconscious, but I heard voices. Voices that were typical of a medical team who

were trying to resuscitate me. But I also heard two other voices that were different. They were talking about me. They said how interesting it was that he was quite intelligent but was not able to accept the fact. What fact? What are they talking about? Does not matter. I will wake up soon, I need to wait a bit more. Then I realized there was no time there. So it was pointless to wait.

OK. Then what fact are they talking about that I do not want to accept? Maybe I am dead. No it is not possible because...

...then as if my consciousness had opened, as if I had been the brightest biologist, physicist, philosopher... or rather as if I had all the knowledge of mankind at my disposal and using this omniscience I came up with an explanation why it was not possible that I was dead, then thinking logically I arrived at the conclusion that it was possible that I had died. No, wait! I had another idea. I thought it through, but it did not work either. Then another one. And thousand other ones ever faster. Then I ran out of explanations.

OK, I am dead. Why is this wrong feeling? Where am I? Then a visual experience started along with the audio. I was at a spaceless white hospital-room-like place (a bit like in Matrix, when Neo gets the weapons). I was lying strapped on a hospital bed. Then the door opened and doctor-like people came in and started to torture me methodically with medical devices. I was screaming. First I felt physical, then spiritual pain, that it was unjust what was happening to me. That it must be a mistake, a misunderstanding. Because...

...then in this state of open consciousness I started to explain why it was unjust. But after every explanation and reasoning the whole thing started again. Bed. Straps. Door. Doctors. Torture. Screaming. Thousands of times. The level of the pain grew every time. After a while I didn't feel physical pain, only mental. In the meantime, I sensed the presence of an immense power (today I would say God) who did not interfere only watched my struggling. (This is free will.)

Finally, I ran out of reasoning... then the idea came up that I can get out if I repent everything. I clearly remember that in the midst of this horrible physical and mental pain I almost burst out laughing. I had the solution: "I will repent then!"

But the horrible pain restarted and it was getting worse... because the regret was not honest. At that moment all masks fell, all hypocrisy, all lies and I understood that I, the small creature wanted to take in the Creator even in the last moment. And if this is the case I really deserve everything. This is just!

...then screaming from the pain I fell in the emptiness, in an austere, cold, dark place where there is no life, there is nothing, nothing just me, only me – separated from everything and everybody, mostly from God (from His love)... knowing clearly the this is going to be like this ever. Always. Not 10, 100 or 1000 years but always.

This was the point when I woke up. But the reality was so true that at first I thought I was dreaming of waking up. As I was expecting the dream to pass, I sensed there was time again. I really returned. I cried. Long time. It was the most real experience of my life when I got an intensive glimpse into hell.

*My life changed from this experience. I have become a saint. A street, a school has been named after me. Soon I will get a statue... (Of course I'm just kidding.)*

I can say, that then a desire was born in my heart to get baptised and start a journey towards conversion. It was not the finish but the start. There is a lot of joy, happiness, and blessing on the way but it isn't an easy path, for sure.

I am asked a lot if I am afraid of death after this. My answer is clearly no. My example shows that at the moment of death everyone has the opportunity to say yes to God's love and the gift of salvation. It cannot be deserved or bought. If we can accept it. If we can recognise it as the Penitent Thief at the moment of his death on the cross. But if we do not practise it on Earth (throughout a lifetime) then it is not going to work. It did not work for me. Because the question did not sound "those who want to go to hell, the second door left".

So I would like to encourage you to practice saying yes to God and self-giving. Use the incredible force of the sacraments (confession, the Eucharist), now and here. So that when the trial comes (it comes for sure, when we die) you can be prepared, not like me in that marathon running in this world and at the moment of death in the other world.