

After the Terror, God Reappears In Public Life

from: *The Wall Street Journal*, 9/19/01
p. A22, by Gerald F. Seib

In the week since terrorists struck America, the most surprising public appearance hasn't been made by a political leader, or a grieving celebrity or a foreign dignitary. The most striking appearance on the national stage has been made by God.

Just one year after a presidential campaign in which the question of whether religious beliefs should be mingled with public life was heatedly debated, Americans have accepted virtually without question a very public turn to religion by their nation and its leaders in a time of grief.

First Meeting In A Cathedral

And, just months after President George Bush stirred controversy by launching an attempt to lower the wall separating government programs and religious charities, the president's shining moment in the crisis came last Friday, when he gave a moving address to an ecumenical national prayer service.

Although some eyebrows were raised when Mr. Bush delivered a threat to terrorists from the pulpit, there was no escaping the fact that the first public gathering of the nation's full political leadership after terrorists struck came *not in the halls of Congress, but in a cathedral.*

The most remarkable thing about this development is how unremarkable it has been. Howls of protests aren't being heard. There is no suggestion of a constitutional crisis. The nation seems relieved by the turn to religion. It is clear that America can handle more religion in public life than cynics and critics contend.

John DiIulio, who just resigned as director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, says of the development: "No one ordered it up, and no one planned it."

Mr. DiIulio's job this year had been to pave the way for Mr. Bush's plan to let church-affiliated groups receive government funds for social programs, on the theory that government and faith-based organizations should work together when they are pursuing the same goal.

Ironically, Mr. DiIulio's final day in office was Tuesday, September 11, the day of the attack, meaning one of his final official acts was to be chased out of the White House by terrorists. Yet that attack may, in the long run, do more to open the way for greater acceptance of religion in public life than all the speeches and articles Mr. DiIulio produced while in office.

The more troubling irony, of course, is that Mr. DiIulio and the rest of the Bush team were evacuated from the White House because of Islamic terrorists, who themselves were acting in the name of religion. In their own depraved way, the hijackers have shown the evil that can come when fanatics use religion to accomplish political goals.

And, indeed, plenty of bad things can still happen when religion and politics mix in this country. Jews, Catholics, and Muslims all can attest to the way some have used religion in politics as a tool of exclusion and prejudice.

Religion A Uniting Force

Like every crisis, this one also presents an opportunity: The chance for the U.S. to show now that religion can be a uniting rather than dividing force in American public life.

The most effective move to combat hate crimes against Muslims in the aftermath of the bombing came within the week of the event, when Mr. Bush visited a mosque to talk of tolerance. The best example of how

to stop divisive religious messages came when the White House publicly repudiated the Rev. Jerry Falwell's suggestion that God allowed the terrorist attack because of America's tolerance of abortion, homosexuality, and secular values—a message for which Rev. Falwell has since apologized.

The best illustration of America's capacity for religious tolerance and diversity lies in one striking fact: On the day of the terrorist assault, officials say, a delegation of 16 Islamic leaders was planning to visit the White House. Thus, if the Islamic terrorists had struck the White House, as some think they intended, they could have killed Muslim leaders in the process.

Religion has helped America cope; even the New York Stock Exchange preceded its resumption of trading with a rendition of "God Bless America." But religion also has tempered the nation's passions. Many religious leaders' message has been: Seek justice, don't lust for revenge. That sentiment was put well by Dean Nathan Baxter at the prayer service, when he urged that "as we act, we not become the evil we deplore."

It is harder to know how lasting this change will be. Today's attitude could well drift away along with the smoke that hangs over the World Trade Center. Yet the fear and foreboding of the past week have been so searing that they may have produced more of a long-term change.

(Editor's note: Rev. Jerry Falwell apologized, since in reality we are all to blame, and not just an isolated few. — See *Jeremiah 13:22*... "And if you ask yourself, Why is all this happening to me? It is because of the grossness of your sins; that is why you have been raped and destroyed by the invading army.")

Our Lady of Fatima told us that we must convert, or *nations will be annihilated*... but, there is great hope, and we WILL convert, because She also told us, that... "In the end, My Immaculate Heart will triumph!"+++

A Child's Miracle

by Dr. Diane M. Komp

(This article is based on the book, *A Child Shall Lead Them — Lessons In Hope From Children With Cancer*, by Diane M. Komp, M.D. Copyright © 1993 by Diane Komp. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House.)

The young couple watched anxiously as I examined their three-month-old baby at Yale-New Haven Hospital, where I specialize in pediatric hematology-oncology. It was difficult to answer the questioning the eyes of Susan and Barry Krumm, for I knew that statistics said their tiny Katherine was destined to die.

Susan and Barry had already grieved over one lost child, who died in infancy. Now their new baby suffered from the same disease, FCL (familial crythrophagocytic lymph-histiocytosis...a genetic form of histiocytosis in which a type of bone marrow cell proliferates abnormally and destroys vital blood elements). Only one of every million babies is born with it.

As a physician, I could not give the Krumms high hopes. To save this child, whom I had affectionately nicknamed Krumm-bunny, I knew we would need a miracle.

It was children like Katherine who led me into pediatrics. I became deeply involved with my patients, even making a lace-trimmed nightgown for one baby whose mother never visited. But, time after time, I was taught by my young charges.

Think About Jesus

In endeavoring to help one boy facing a rugged test, I suggested he envision Jesus in the room with him. "Think about Jesus," I said. "I want you to imagine that Jesus is hugging you tightly." He looked up at me as if I were a little odd and said, "But Jesus is already here." He knew the truth better than I. The test went smoothly.

But Katherine was facing something far more perilous than a test. If something wasn't done soon, she would be dead within weeks. There was one chance to save her life, but it was slim—finding a donor for a bone marrow transplant.

"Book Of Hope"

As a stopgap, we put her on chemotherapy. (Even so, she might live six months, perhaps a year.) Katherine rallied under the treatment, chortling at all of us with her delightful smile. I asked fellow doctors and nurses to write notes in the "Book of Hope" I kept outside her door. As the staff struggled to record positive words, I saw a subtle, even hopeful, progression in their notations on her medical chart. Together, we joined in a daring hope that she might survive. She became an outpatient, coming in for three days of chemo every three weeks.

The odds we faced were formidable. First, we had to find the right donor. So far, the only successful transplants in babies this young were from a brother or sister. But Katherine had no living sibling. Hers would be the first unrelated transplantation in our hospital.

Finding a match in time would be a major miracle. It had to be perfect; six genetic elements must be exactly the same. No child had yet survived a partial match; even five out of six aren't enough.

If we found a suitable donor we would then face the most excruciating risk of all. For seven days preceding the transplant, Katherine would have to be given doses of chemotherapy strong enough to destroy her own bone marrow, making way for the new cells. If after starting this chemo the donor changed his or her mind, or the donated marrow was delayed en route, Katherine would certainly die. It was like shooting an arrow at her heart, trusting that it would be blocked at the last instant. It demanded an incredible step of faith.

She Is In God's Hands

"We see no other way," Susan said. Lifting her chin, she added,

"Barry and I know the odds. We have prayed for our child even before she was born. We trust the Lord." She reached down and picked up her daughter, who nestled her head on her mother's shoulder. "She'll be in God's hands, one way or the other."

Search For Donor Launched

I thank God for the altruistic, loving people all over the world who have registered as bone marrow donors. They include doctors, secretaries, nurses, laborers, teachers, housewives. We filed our request through an international registry of donors. In the meantime, Katherine continued coming in for treatment. One month passed...two...four...six. Katherine seemed to be hanging in there, but after a year, I began to worry.

Katherine's blood was showing a rise in abnormal cells. As I bent over to examine her, she waved a pudgy hand and blessed me with her trusting smile. You are like little David standing before mighty Goliath, I thought.

Then came the call we had been waiting for; a suitable donor had been found! Christine Ratcliffe, a 20-year-old mother of three, who lived in England, had registered as a potential donor. Her bone marrow was a perfect match.

All to Coincide

A date was set for its harvesting in a London hospital, timed to coincide that with the schedule of a British Airways jet. One of our nurses, Hanne Peterson, would fly to London, pick up the marrow and return the same day.

Though there would be no turning back once the lethal chemotherapy was started, Susan and Barry were resolute. "We didn't come this far to falter now," they said. So, seven days before the marrow was to be harvested, Katherine began receiving the chemo.

Poor little tyke. Now defenseless against common germs, she was isolated in a protective plastic "life island." Her mother donned surgical

garb to hold her. Katherine's mouth developed ulcers. She whimpered in her sleep, and I wanted to take her pain away and hurl it off this planet.

Each terrible day lumbered by like the slow tick of an old clock. By now, Katherine was almost 17 months old and had already survived much longer than expected.

History Made Today!

On March 9, 1992, Christine Ratcliffe entered a London hospital, where doctors aspirated the life-giving marrow from her hip bone. In America we received the news: the harvesting had taken place; Hanne had boarded the plane at Heathrow and was on her way home. The media headlined the dramatic news: "History is being made today at Yale-New Haven Hospital."

Prayer Chains

We all kept up our prayers. So did Susan and Barry's church congregation, as well as the prayer chains around the country that joined in.

At six o'clock that evening, we stood with TV news crews at the helipad of Yale-New Haven Hospital, eagerly awaiting the helicopter that would bring Hanne and her priceless harvest from John F. Kennedy International Airport.

Finally, over glimmering Long Island Sound, a small speck appeared in the sunset. Then came the approaching chop-chop of the rotor blades. The helicopter settled on the landing pad before us, and Hanne jubilantly stepped out carrying the precious marrow in a refrigerated case.

It was rushed to the Bone Marrow Transplantation Unit. Suspended above Katherine in its clear plastic pouch, the bone marrow looked like dark red blood, which some of it was. Her parents stood there, quiet with awe.

Fearfully And Wonderfully Made

The tubes were connected, and like a blood transfusion, the infusion began. As the marrow

entered the baby's veins, we knew that the life-giving cells would find their way into the baby's own marrow in a way we have yet to fully understand.

I thought of the Psalmist's song: "I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Thy works..."

It was over in a few hours. Now came an anxious time of waiting to see if those new marrow cells would set up shop and start making new ones. Katherine's mother and father were by her side practically every waking moment. Blood sample after blood sample was tested.

First Day Of Spring

Hallelujah! On the first day of spring, March 20, 1992, Katherine's blood counts indicated new life! The gracious gift had been accepted in record time. Now the little girl could defend herself against infection.

The Tuesday after Easter, Susan Krumm entered her daughter's life island for the first time without mask, gloves or gown. Katherine stood up and clapped her hands with glee. Her mother dressed her in a flowered Easter frock, white bonnet and gloves, slippers and a color-coordinated pacifier. The baby paused before a mirror to admire herself, then holding her parents' hands, walked out the door.

As I watched my little Krummbunny toddle down the hall, I remembered how her innocent faith had never wavered, though mine often had. Again I was reminded that it is not we grown-ups who lead the children home, but these little ones who lead us instead.

God's Gift Of Life

Human life is a gift from God, and that gift, here and eternal, is precious beyond all understanding. I pray that all people appreciate the value of every human life, for we are all created in the image and likeness of God. For that reason, it becomes clear that every person created by God, in every phase of one's existence, deserves the opportunity to experience life and love to the fullest. +++

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Fr. Angelo Helped Me Find God

by Luciano Begotti
from *Echo of Mary*, March-April 2001

I live in Reggio Emilia, Italy, and this is the little story of the great conversion which changed my life. I was an atheist. I grew up in an atheist family, but I got married in Church to make my wife happy.

One day she asked me to accompany her friend, Fr. Angelo, to Medjugorje as his driver. I flatly refused, but she kept on nagging at me for more than a week, and in the end I accepted without even knowing why. I said good-bye to my atheist parents who asked me not to waste money on "madonnas" or Rosary beads!

I had never seen or met Fr. Angelo before. We departed, and after 12 hours of traveling amid cordial conversation, we arrived in Medjugorje.

The next morning I accompanied him to Sister Elvira's community for former drug addicts. There he celebrated Mass.

Only One Standing!

During the celebration, I was the only one (and there were 75 men) who didn't kneel down. I felt so embarrassed that, out of respect for them, I went down on my knees. It was only the second time in my life that I had done that.

While Fr. Angelo remained to hear confessions, a seminarian took me to the places of apparition. It was there that I found a small statue of Our Lady, which I would later give to my mother.

Would I Confess?

In the afternoon, while I was taking him to some other place, Fr. Angelo asked me if I wanted to confess. I firmly refused; after all, there was no sense in it for me... but with great calm he explained to me the meaning of this great gift,

and for the first time in my life, I confessed. I then went on my own to Mt. Krizevac, where God touched my soul even more deeply.

The next morning, Fr. Angelo invited me to go to Communion. As I received the Eucharist, I felt an intense warmth in my heart, and to my surprise, I began crying and could not stop. By this time, I was feeling very confused.

Although I wanted to do so, I could not understand what was happening. People I met were telling me that I was not in Medjugorje by chance; that Our Lady had wanted me there.

The Reaction At Home

My mind by now was in turmoil...also because I had to decide what to do once I got home: say nothing, or accept the change and pay the consequences.

After a sleepless night, I went back up Mt. Krizevac, and there I surrendered myself completely to Mary, promising that if everything I experienced was real, I would become Her witness for life. I set off on the long walk of conversion, and I felt a presence within me which gave me strength and courage.

At home, however, my children and parents refused everything. I was assailed by doubts and uncertainty, and I felt uneasy about going to Mass in my town, where I felt out of place and judged by the others.

Temptations Were Strong

Temptations were very strong, especially when in Church, and my old habit of blaspheming was particularly hard to shed. On March 3rd, 2000, Fr. Angelo died, but I remember his encouragement to find God's peace.

Thanks be to God, although I know that I still have a long way to go, with the help of Our Lady and Her Rosary, my conversion continues amid joy, serenity, and peace: gifts of the Lord to those who persevere with Him. Now, He alone can satisfy my heart's desire. +++

Science and the Rosary

by Br. John Samaha, S.M.
from: *Queen*, March-April, 01

More than a century ago, a proud university student boarded a train in France and sat next to an older man who seemed to be a peasant of comfortable means. The brash student noticed that the older gentleman was slipping beads through his fingers. He was praying the Rosary.

"Sir, do you still believe in such outdated things?" the student inquired.

"Yes, I do. Don't you?" the man responded.

The student laughed and admitted, "I do not believe in such silly things. Take my advice. Throw the Rosary out the window, and learn what science has to say about it."

"Science? I do not understand this science. Perhaps you can explain it to me," the man said humbly, tears welling in his eyes.

The university student noticed that the man was deeply moved. To avoid hurting further the older person's feelings, he said, "Please give me your address, and I will send you some literature to explain the matter to you."

The man fumbled in the inside pocket of his coat and pulled out his business card. On reading the card, the student lowered his head in shame and was speechless. The card read: "Louis Pasteur, Director of the Institute of Scientific Research, Paris." The deluded science student had encountered his country's leading chemist and bacteriologist. +++

Special Tape For Youth

Send for a copy of an important audio tape by visionary Diane Lyons Frasco for young people about understanding and living the Ten Commandments. Tape is free, but a contribution for postage is requested. +++

Thank You

from *Stories of Love*, p. 64
Our Lady to Alan Ames

As he waited in the hospital for news of the birth of his child and the well-being of his wife, the husband was very anxious. A nurse came and spoke to him reassuringly, "It will not be long now; do not worry, your wife is in good hands."

"I know, but it is difficult not to worry; she has had a difficult pregnancy," replied the man, with a worried look on his face. "And we have lost two children before."

"It will be all right," said the nurse, gently, as she put her arm around his shoulder, giving him a hug.

"It's in God's hands," shrugged the man.

"Well, there are no better hands for it to be in, are there?" asked the nurse.

"No, you're right," said the still anxious man.

"Whatever happens, it's His will; I know that," he continued. "But it is still hard."

"I know, I know," said the nurse, soothingly.

"Can I get you something to drink?" she asked.

"No, thank you. I don't think I could drink or eat anything," replied the man.

"Well, I will come back as soon as I hear anything," said the nurse, as she stood up to leave.

"Thank you," said the man, as he slipped back into his thoughts.

Several hours later, the now very concerned man was walking up and down in an agitated way, still having had no news of his wife and child. The nurse passed by, and, looking at the man, said in her mind, "Oh Lord, please let them be all right." Just then a doctor came to the man saying, "Sit down, please. I have something to tell you."

"Oh no, they are not dead, are they? Please, please don't tell me that...please," sobbed the man.

"No, no; they are not dead, but there is a little problem," said the doctor.

"They are alive. Oh, thank You God, thank You," cried the now happy man. "What problem?" he asked, as the words sank in.

"Well, you have a son; he was born 50 minutes ago," explained the doctor. "But..."

"But what?" asked the now uncertain man.

"He was born with a defect," said the doctor slowly, then paused.

"What sort of a defect?" demanded the father.

"There is a problem with his brain; it seems that it may not have developed properly, and because of that he may never walk or use his hands as he should. I'm sorry," stated the doctor, sadly.

"But he will live?" asked the father.

"Yes, he will," said the doctor.

"Thank God for that," said the man with a smile.

"How is my wife?" he asked.

"She is fine...a little tired, but otherwise okay," replied the doctor.

"Can I see them?" asked the smiling and excited man.

"Of course; follow me," directed the doctor, as he led the husband and now father into a room where his wife was in bed holding the baby boy.

When the wife saw her husband she began to cry, "I am sorry, I am sorry. I couldn't give you a healthy baby; I am sorry," she was sobbing and sobbing as the husband came to her smiling.

Reaching out he embraced his wife and his son. "You have nothing to be sorry about; you should be happy we have a son...a son that God gave to us. What a gift!" he said, lovingly.

"But he will never be normal," sobbed the wife.

"That is the way God gave him, and we must be grateful for that," answered the husband, with a certainty in his voice.

"Oh my husband, I love you, and I am thankful to God that He brought such a good man into my life," smiled the wife, as she strained her neck to lift her head

and kiss her husband on the cheek. The husband leaned across her and kissed his sleeping son, saying, "And we must never stop thanking God for our son, either."

The doctor went out into the corridor shaking his head, "What is it, doctor?" asked the nurse, who had comforted the man earlier.

"They have a deformed baby and they are thanking God for it. I can't believe it," he answered.

"Why not?" inquired the nurse.

"Well, the child is deformed. I thought they would be angry with God...not thanking Him."

At that moment the father came from the room, went over to the doctor and shook his hand, saying,

"Thank you, doctor, thank you." Then he rushed off to find a telephone to call his family.

"See what I mean?" whispered the doctor.

The nurse looked at the doctor, and said, "These people see the value of life and what a wonderful gift it is from God. They do not look at what may be wrong in the child, they see what is right, and it is right that this child lives and has a happy and loving family, as all children deserve regardless of appearance, of deformities, or of the extra work a child may bring to its parents. All children are a gift of God's love, and none deserve to be treated as if they are not."

The doctor was silent for a moment, then said, "I suppose you're right; this job has made me a little callous." He left to carry on with his duties.

The nurse smiled and went off to visit the child-caring center, where her own daughter was playing. She entered the room to her smiling daughter, who came running towards the nurse with her arms open wide, wanting an embrace.

"Mummy," called the daughter happily, as she sank into her mother's arms. The nurse began to cry as she felt the love of her little daughter touch her heart, and she knew that the Downs Syndrome her child had did not stop her love...it enhanced it. +++

“Apparitions and the Catholic Church”

by Fr. John Wang

God created the human race out of love, and He has constantly maintained communication with humanity from the very beginning. He talked to Adam and Eve. He spoke with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and the prophets. Ultimately, He revealed Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word (Hebrews 1:1-2).

God manifested His will and his plan of salvation for the human race through revelation which the Church calls public. Public Revelation, as recorded in Holy Scripture in both the Old and the New Testaments, and handed down by sacred tradition, is perfect and complete. It cannot be further perfected and completed.

However, Public Revelation has not been made completely explicit; it remains for Christian faith to gradually grasp its full significance over the course of the centuries (Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, second edition, No. 66).

All Through The Ages

Although there cannot be any new Public Revelation, all through the ages there have been so-called private revelations. God has not interrupted His communication with the human race.

These private revelations, given through private individuals, are not essential to our salvation, since we have everything we need from Public Revelation. They do, however, furnish assistance in prayer and in Christian life and help people live the biblical teachings more fully in a certain period of history. Through them, God's people are urgently reminded of the importance of love, repentance, prayer, sacrifices, and obeying God's commandments.

The invisible God communicates with humans in different ways. Apparitions, visions, and locutions (speakings) are some of them. The Church does not deny the possibility of private revelations. The Church does view them with extreme

caution, and approaches them with a certain amount of healthy skepticism. When being studied, all available scientific means and tools are used to ascertain credibility and authenticity of these private revelations.

Hidden Presence of God

Already in 1563, the Ecumenical Council of Trent required the establishment of a diocesan commission to study apparition claims. The commission was to verify whether or not the alleged apparitions manifest a hidden presence of God, renew community life, convert hearts, reawaken and stimulate faith, and renew hope and dynamism in the Church.

The final evaluation was to fall into one of three categories:

1. *Constat supernaturalitas*, that is to say, the apparition is recognized, approved and declared “worthy of belief” by the Church.

2. *Nonconstat supernaturalitas*, which means the supernatural character of the apparition in question is not evident. The Church takes a neutral stance in this case. The apparition is not condemned because there is nothing contrary to the faith.

3. *Constat non-supernaturalitas*, which would mean the claimed apparition is false, and hence not worthy of belief.

Norms In Judging Apparitions

On Feb. 25, 1978, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith issued norms for proceeding in judging alleged apparitions and revelations along similar lines. This document asks the diocesan commission to probe the moral certainty of the miraculous and exceptional occurrence beyond human explanation, the honesty, sincerity, mental soundness, and moral conduct of the seers, the content of the messages received by the visionaries, and the fruit generated by the claimed apparition.

Cases Submitted

From 1900 to 1996, 386 cases of apparitions were submitted to the Holy See for decision. To date, 86

decisions have been handed down: eight, approved; 11, neutral; 68, negative; 299, no decision made. The eight approved apparitions include Fatima, in Portugal; Beauraing and Banneux, in Belgium; Akita, in Japan; Syracuse, in Italy; Zeitun, in Egypt; Manila, in the Philippines (according to some sources); and Betania, in Venezuela.

In Akita, the visionary, Sr. Agnes Sasagawa, is a Buddhist convert who joined the Institute of the Handmaids of the Eucharist. In 1973, she started having mystical experiences. She saw light streaming out of the tabernacle, and later, the statue of the Madonna in the convent chapel began weeping and sweating.

The wounds of the stigmata appeared both on her left hand and on the right hand of the statue. Sr. Agnes also began receiving messages from the Blessed Mother and her guardian angel. On January 4, 1975, the statue started to shed tears, and in a period of six years and eight months, it wept 101 times.

These events were witnessed by hundreds of people, including the local Bishop, John Shojiro Ito, Ordinary of the diocese of Niigata, to which Akita belongs. Bishop Ito was present on four occasions to watch the weeping Madonna, and he had these phenomena closely examined. After consultation with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he approved the supernatural character of these events and authorized the veneration of the Holy Mother of Akita.

The Church teaches that Public Revelation must be accepted by every Christian, but the Christian faithful are free to accept or reject private revelations. The Church, however, considers authentic private revelations as a gift of God, and sees in them a valuable aid to spiritual growth. The Church, admits the possibility of private revelations, and does not want to suffocate anything that bears good fruit. The Holy Spirit works freely.

In considering the matter of private revelation, therefore, extremes must be avoided. That is to say, one should shun the attitude of both naïve credulity as well as automatic incredulity. The safest way of discernment is to follow the decision by the Magisterium of the Church. +++

Have Faith

from *Stories of Love*, p. 170
Jesus to Alan Ames

"It is amazing!" exclaimed the doctor as he held the newly born baby in his hands. "Every time I deliver a baby, I am filled with wonder over the new life that has come to earth," he continued, as he held the child in front of its mother.

"You have a beautiful baby girl; a blessing from God." The mother looked at her child and smiled, nodding weakly in agreement, reaching out for her baby, which she then held close to her.

"She is beautiful, Doctor," said the husband and father, who was also there in the room. "Look at her little hands and feet; they are wonderful."

The doctor looked once more at the baby girl, then back at the man, saying, "You are a lucky man. You should thank God for His blessings in your life."

"I will, Doctor, everyday; I promise," replied the man.

"You know, I have delivered thousands of babies. Each time, I look at the child and wonder what God has planned for them to do in their lives, and I wonder if the child will be given the opportunity, help, love, and encouragement to respond to God's call," pondered the doctor.

"We will give her every opportunity. This is a promise we made to God before she was born, and it is one we intend to keep," responded the father.

A Wonderful Gift

"I am pleased to hear that, and I will pray you will be able to do so. I meet so many parents who make promises to God before their child is born, but do not keep them. I hope you do," said the doctor. He then continued, "You know, God has given you a

wonderful gift, and with that gift comes the responsibility to help your child live as God wants her to. If she can do that, her life will be a happy one, and I know that is what you want for her... to be happy."

The father smiled at the doctor and moved to the side of the bed and began to stroke both the head of his wife and his daughter, saying, "This is what we both want...that she is happy." As he did this, the father could feel and hear little sounds of what seemed like contentment coming from his newly born daughter.

His wife opened her eyes and looked with happiness at her husband. "We did it," she whispered; "we did it."

The doctor said, as he left the room, "I will come back later. You should have time together now."

The wife, still looking at her husband and smiling, said weakly, "I knew she would be all right. I knew God would hear and answer our prayers."

The husband, with joy in his face, replied, "Yes, God did, and everything is fine."

The mother leaned forward and kissed her baby softly on the forehead. "If you have faith, all is possible," she said.

No To Abortion

The man stood there silently just thinking about all the difficulties in the pregnancy. Thinking about the other doctors who advised them to terminate the pregnancy, because they thought the mother would die. Thinking about the strength of faith his wife had to say no to an abortion, no matter what the risk. Thinking about the way his wife would tell them all, that God would take care of her family, and if she were to die so that her baby could live, then that, too, was God's will, and she would accept it.

Thinking about the times he felt so weak and so helpless believing his wife might die, but how always she would say, "Have

faith." Thinking how they found, through the Church, a doctor who shared their belief, their faith...a doctor who helped them through the hard times they faced ...a doctor who knew God would do the best in this situation, and a doctor who treasured life, as it is supposed to be.

Strong By The Grace Of God

"What are you thinking about, Dear?" asked the wife, interrupting the man's train of thought.

"About how strong you are, my love," he replied, tenderly.

"We are both strong by the grace of God," said the wife, lovingly, as she looked at her husband, with admiration in her eyes.

"And I think our daughter is, also," laughed the man as the baby squeezed his finger which he had placed in her hand. Just then the doctor returned, "Have you thought of a name for her yet?" he asked. Both the husband and wife smiled, as they said simultaneously, "Faith."

Apparitions Approved in Rwanda, Africa

On June 30, 2001, Archbishop Augustin Misago of Gikongoro, Rwanda, released a statement indicating his "definitive judgment" that the reported apparitions in Kibeho are authentic. The Vatican showed support of his statement by making it public.

The apparitions of the Virgin were first reported at Kibeho in November of 1981. Archbishop Misago stressed that he was satisfied that three original seers had truly encountered Our Lady.

The archdiocese had appointed two commissions — one of doctors, the other of theologians — to look into the Kibeho reports. In 1988, the Archbishop gave his approval for the cult of the Virgin of Kibeho, but he now affirms the apparitions deserve to be treated as authentic. +++

Our Lady's Triumph!

from *The Medjugorje Sentinel*
#50, June 2001

In January of 2001, Fr. Stefano Gobbi pointed out that during the Jubilee Year, three important events were fulfilled, that have a relationship to the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart.

1) The Beatification of the two shepherd children, Jacinta and Francisco, by the Pope in Fatima, October 13, 2000.

2) The publication of the third part of the Secret of Fatima in June.

3) The solemn act of entrustment made by the Pope with the Bishops on October 8, 2000, in which, at the dawn of the Third Millennium, he consecrated to Our Lady the Church and humanity.

In this sense, we can say Our Lady has begun Her Triumph. From now on, She will continue it in a powerful and extraordinary way by means of Her little children consecrated to Her. With them, in every part of the world, Her Army has been formed. +++



In Akita, Japan, on September 28, 1981, Sister Agnes suddenly felt the presence of the Angel at her side during the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. She did not see the Angel in person, but a Bible appeared open before her eyes and she was invited to read a passage (Genesis 3:15)...the voice of the Angel was heard explaining in sort of a preamble that the passage had relationship with the tears of Mary, then continued:

"There is a meaning to the figure one hundred and one. This signifies that sin came into the world by a woman and it is also by a woman that salvation came to the world. The zero between the two signifies the Eternal God Who is from all eternity until eternity. The first one represents Eve, the last the Virgin Mary."+++

Pilgrimage Program:

SEND FOR COMPLETE ITINERARIES

Deduct \$25 on all 2002 pilgrimages when deposit of \$150 is paid in 2001.

Guadalupe, Mexico — for Feast Day celebrations. Dec. 7 thru 13, 2001, (7 days), only \$999 with flight from Newark, NJ. (Land only, \$699) We will attend celebration on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Juan Diego's Feast, and both the Eve and Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Visits to Ocotlan, Puebla, St. Michael's Well, and more.

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Betania, Anniversary — Fri., March 22 to Wed. March 27, 2002, six days. Price \$1289, from either Miami or Newark.

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Fatima — Tues., April 16, to Tues., April 23, 2002, 8 days, \$1149. This will be a restful and highly spiritual experience, making the Hungarian Stations of the Cross, visiting the Postulation Center, the village and homes of the three children of Fatima in Aljustal, the birthplace of St. Anthony in Lisbon, the Miraculous Host in Santarem, Sister Lucy's convent in Coimbra, the castle museum in Ourem, and the Shrine of Our Lady of Nazareth.

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Germany—Passion play in Erl/Tyrol, near Innsbrook. Sat. June 22 to Wed. July 3, 2002 (12 days, 10 nights) \$2799. Tour conductor is Anna Mader, who guided our wonderful Oberammergau pilgrimage in 2000. Itinerary available upon request. More details coming soon.

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Fatima and Lourdes — Sat., July 20 to Mon., Aug. 5, 2002. Pilgrimage is 17 days, \$2189. (We have added an extra day at only \$10 more in price than last year!) This is probably our most popular pilgrimage. Feast Day visit to **Santiago Compostella** (Shrine of St. James), **Pontevedra, Zaragoza, Avila, Braga, Santarem, Fatima, Lourdes, Alba de Tormes** to see the incorrupt arm and heart of St. Teresa of Avila, and a two-day stay in **Garabandal**.

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Ireland — Fri., Aug. 17, to Tues., Aug. 28, 2002 (12 days) \$1798. Msgr. Joseph James will be our chaplain. In 1985, in Lubbock Texas, he was given the gift of reading souls during confessions.

Visits to Knock, Melleray Grotto, Ballinspittle, Inchigeela, Attymass (home of Fr. Patrick Payton) Achill Sound House of Prayer, Veritas and the Padre Pio Center in Dublin, & more. Meetings with visionaries, such as Mary Casey, Tom Lennon, others, and Christina Gallagher in Achill at the House of Prayer (if she is available).

This pilgrimage varies and is usually an intense spiritual experience.

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Poland Shrine Tour — Fri., October 4 to Wed., October 16, 2002 (12 days), \$1999. By popular demand, our chaplain is again Fr. C. Krisa, of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Seminary at Orchard Lake, Michigan.

Includes Warsaw, Zoliborz, Krakow, Niapokalonow, Zakopane, Zelazowa Wola, Wagnivniki (Divine Mercy Center), Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Wadowice (birthplace of John Paul II), and the beautiful Shrine at Lechen.

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All pilgrimages include: priest on each bus, daily Mass, three Rosaries, breakfast and dinner, and a blue 101 jacket. Non-refundable deposit is \$150 per person.

Spend a few quiet days near the Blue Army Shrine in Washington, NJ. Call 101 Foundation for details.

Write for information regarding the **Garabandal** Miracle Flight.

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