

A Miracle Everyday

A lady, whose age was much older than mine, asked me one time if I still believed that miracles occur in these modern days. At first I was stunned. Here was a woman who had spent her life in the Catholic Church, put her children through Catholic schools, and participated in different church ministries her whole life. I thought her time here on earth would have proven that miracles still occur. So I asked, “Do you mean ‘parting of the Red Sea’ miracles?” “Miracles, just miracles” she said. I stopped, waited on the Lord, and then related this story to her.

Several years ago my husband and I had the honor bestowed upon us by friends to be godparents to their new son. Being a godparent is incredibly important not only to us, but all the others who belong to this ministry and faith community. We always oblige when asked to stand as godparents and try to be a constant part of their lives. Currently we have eleven godchildren. We see them as a sacred responsibility and pray for them everyday. We often joke about how our own children have taken after their godparents in many ways more than their biological parents.

With every child we are required either to take a class or submit a notice from our home parish that we are Catholics in good standing. Having baptized six of our own children and eleven others, we ought, by now, to know the Roman Catholic doctrine of baptism. The mother of the baby for whom we were going stand delivered a packet from their parish and it contained different articles and educational information on baptism. Having taken Catholic studies and history classes in college, studied Scripture for many years and been reared a Catholic, I believed I had a pretty firm understanding of Original Sin and the Catholic Church’s teaching on baptism. Imagine my surprise when the first paper’s title read “Baptism: Not a Stain Remover.” I proceeded to read an article on how we were encouraged not to view infant baptism as antidote for Original Sin, but rather as an initiation into the greater Church. Part of the reason for this thought was so that the parents of the child would not see their precious baby as something evil in need of redemption.

After daily Mass the next day I stopped into my parish’s office and asked to talk to the pastor. I wanted to be completely clear on what I was reading and what the diocese was allowing to be taught. He was unavailable, so the associate pastor invited me into his office. He was a young priest, not much older than I, handsome, charismatic and often viewed as “challenging” by older parishioners. We sat across a large desk from one another, like a student in a principal’s office.

“Do you know where the term “original sin” came from?” he asked.

“It came from Augustine’s writings against the Valentians,” I answered.

Father slid back in his chair. His eyes were large as if astounded that a lay woman would know such a thing. He smiled and nodded his head. “So you do know where it came from.” We smiled at one another and proceeded to have an interesting exchange. For every point of liberal reasoning he gave, I gave solid Catholic doctrinal teaching and Scripture. His take was that the Bible was merely a group of stories to illustrate a moral teaching or a point of truth. I cited encyclicals, councils and catechetical evidence to the contrary; Holy Scripture could not be just a group of stories. Exasperated he finally shook his head.

“Come on. Now, you can not tell me that you believe that there was a man named Adam, a woman named Eve, and that there was a snake that could talk? Do you?”

I stopped. How should I respond to him? I could not convince him to change his mind when it was not about knowledge or reason. This was a point of faith. It can only be known in the Spirit.

“Yes, Father, I see your point. But then again, I believe there was a fourteen year old little girl who got pregnant and said she never sex. And the baby that she had grew up to be man who never sinned. He was crucified for my sins, died, descended into hell and then three days later resurrected, ascended to heaven and now is present body, blood, soul and divinity in a little piece of bread and a cup of wine. Yes, I could see what you mean that it would be hard to believe in man named Adam, a woman named Eve, and that snake could talk.”

He sat for a moment, folded his hands his hands across his chest and lowered his head. “Yes”, he said quietly, “I see what you mean.”

After I told my story to the woman I saw a look of puzzlement on her face. I felt the need to explain further. All we do, all we say, all we believe should be and is based on faith. Just as with Abraham, our father in faith, we live in a world where there is not a great amount of encouragement to believe in the Creator God. In fact, our world points to other gods, such as science and reason, and has a distinct disdain for faith. We as believers are assaulted, if you will, for holding on to faith. The greatest assault is all forms of humanism which is perpetrated on us in a mock form of Christianity. This ideology tells us all we need to do is be good to other human beings, to the world, and that is “good enough” when it clearly says in Scripture to believe and act (Rom.10:8-11). Our faith, our love is real and active (I Jn. 3:18); starting with faith, a gift from God, and letting it bloom into obedient action to God’s Word.

Here we are more than two thousand years after Jesus Christ and we still believe. We believe in a one true God: God the Father, his only begotten Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. We believe in the true presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. We believe under the threat of being ostracized by family, friend, neighbors and colleagues. Some even face death for that faith. It used be that when a man said he was a Christian, he was respected. His handshake was firm and was it as good as his word. Now that is laughable.

The fact that we still believe is a miracle. The fact that there are those still seeking God, still seeking to be baptized into this faith, and still receive Christ’s precious Body and Blood is a miracle. So, do I believe there are still miracles in this modern age? Yes! There are miracles everywhere and everyday. I expect these miracles, for life in Jesus Christ is a miracle everyday. We just need to use eyes of faith to see them. Do you see what I mean?