

When God Speaks Back

This is the true story of a very intimate encounter with The Lord. Every detail is described exactly as it happened. Only things of a purely personal nature have been left out. At the time of the event I was a 49 year-old businessman, happily married for 26 years (to the same terrific woman) and the father of two fine teenage sons. The Lord has richly blessed me, granting all the desires of my heart. A practicing Catholic, I attend Mass and receive the Sacraments regularly, teach Catechism classes, study The Bible and maintain an active and satisfying prayer life.

I believe that God shared this message with everyone who prayed during the terrible week of SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, but many were simply too distracted and overwhelmed by the unfolding tragedy to hear it. I was fortunate to find myself alone, in a dark, quiet place, free from distractions, where it was absolutely necessary that I stay awake. For hours, I had nothing else to do but drive, pray, and listen to The Lord. What I heard changed my life. Perhaps reading this account can have a similar effect on you.

The World Trade Center Disaster was barely three days past, the nation still in shock and mourning, the military on high alert. In the midst of all this, I found it necessary to leave home and family to make a 5-hour auto trip, alone, in the middle of the night, on urgent family business.

As is my practice, I often use the time I spend driving, to pray. When you live in a big city, praying is often a prudent thing to do while driving, if only to get you safely through the horrendous traffic. But this night's prayer would be different. Once away from the city, I was able to easily cruise at the posted speed limit (OK, maybe just a little OVER the posted limit) and found myself on a virtually deserted stretch of road.

The weather was clear and dark, with only a sliver of moon visible through scattered clouds. For some reason, reception on the car radio was very poor, so I shut it off. It was one o'clock Saturday morning. "Lord", I said, "If You have some time, I would appreciate a little company." Since I have always believed that The Lord never fails to hear the prayers of His people, (and since He and I have been close friends for a number of years) I naturally assumed that He wouldn't mind riding with me for a while.

I went on ... "This World Trade Center disaster has me feeling really low. I feel like I've lost a close friend or relative, even though I don't know any of the people who died there. I have a dull headache all the time, and I keep seeing the image of those towers in my mind, over and over. I don't understand how stuff like this can happen. Why couldn't You stop it somehow? Does it bother You the same way it bothers me? If You don't mind, Lord, I'll stop talking now and just wait for Your answer."

Nothing. Just dark road, white stripes and the thump of an occasional pothole. Silence. Deafening silence.

I reached over to the passenger seat, to check. Maybe the Lord wasn't riding with me tonight after-all? Maybe He was too busy with all those people that needed Him back in New York?

Or maybe He was listening to the prayers of President Bush, or some other high government official? My solitary late-night drive continued.

I'm not sure when I realized it, or exactly what time it began, but suddenly, my mind was being flooded with words, images and thoughts that were definitely not my own. It was like watching the opening scene of the "Star Wars" movie, where words scroll into view, come into sharp focus and then scroll away.

Only they weren't just words. These were complete concepts and dream-like images packed with intense emotions. Awesome thoughts. Elegant thoughts. Loving thoughts. I could feel them!

And no, I hadn't fallen asleep at the wheel.

This, (in my own far less eloquent words), is how The Lord answered my questions on that very dark night and then went on to educate me about another matter that I had, until then, been able to conveniently ignore.

**"I am sorry you are so upset by Tuesday's events.
I too, Am shocked and outraged by the great evil that men can do."**

**"I know that many are grieving, many are frightened and many more are terribly angry.
I never wanted this for you."**

**"When my friend Lazarus fell asleep (died), he was at peace. His spirit was in the care of Our Father, so I did not mourn for him. Still, when I went to meet Martha and Mary and the people of the village, they were so full of grief that I, too, began to cry. I cried for them, because I knew the profound pain they were experiencing at the loss of their beloved brother and neighbor.
So, you see, I know how you feel and why you feel that way."**

Jesus went on ... "My head ached with sorrow, too."

**"Things like this happen because men allow themselves to be led astray by the
Evil One.**

**They choose to believe lies and false teachings
and soon become totally consumed by hate and loathing."**

**"You ask Me why I didn't stop this. I told YOU how to stop it when I walked the streets of Jerusalem almost 2,000 years ago. LOVE ONE ANOTHER. BE KIND. BE GENEROUS. FORGIVE EACH OTHER.
LIFT-UP YOUR HEARTS TO THE LORD."**

"You didn't listen."

**You ask Me, "Does this bother Me like it bothers you?
You say you grieve for your fallen citizens, innocent victims all, even though they are strangers to
you."**

"How much greater would be your sadness if they were your own children?"

“I’m telling you these and other things because you asked Me about them, but there is another matter I want to speak to you about, so pay close attention.”

“The entire world is outraged because a group of men murdered several thousand innocent civilians and destroyed a number of great buildings and four commercial aircraft. Your President, Congress and fellow citizens are suddenly willing to pay any price, undertake any labor, to wipe out this great evil. There is another great evil in the world, an evil that is tolerated by men, even promoted by many.”

“It is the abominable practice of abortion.”

“Each day, thousands of My most innocent, most helpless creations are torn from their place of rest, murdered, and then discarded as nothing more than common trash.”

“No man has the authority to do this, and it will not continue, as it greatly troubles Me.”

**“I want you to find a way to eliminate this disgusting, sub-human act.
What has been done until now has not worked. Consult with My people.
Put together a coalition. Spend whatever it requires. Pay any price.
Undertake any labor to wipeout this great evil.
I will provide you with whatever is needed.”**

Reciting all of this out loud as I was receiving it, I still did not fully comprehend what was happening. I was shaking, totally soaked in sweat, with tears streaming down my face. My arms and legs were tingling, as if I had received an electric shock. Blinking to clear my vision, I glanced at the clock. An hour and a half had passed. I sat there for a very long while, peering ahead into the darkness, took a deep breath, and slowly let it out. “Lord”, I said, “I never realized ... I never even thought about abortion. I had no idea You felt this way ... that You were being hurt like this.”

The Lord reminded me of another time a few years ago, when He first brought the subject to my attention. I had conveniently forgotten about it. I made no reply.

Another wave washed over me as I began to recite aloud a dozen ways we would discourage abortions and encourage women to carry their babies to term. How we would change the priorities of society and the government. Get every religious denomination to focus their efforts squarely on the abortion problem until it is no more. Work more closely with the medical establishment. Use the wealth and inspiration of The Lord to change the hearts of men. It went on.

Stunned by the intensity of all that I had just experienced, I could only respond, “Lord, I understand, Now, I truly understand. Please help me to remember what You shared with me tonight. Help me to bring to mind Your words, exactly as You spoke them, until I can get somewhere to write this down ... and Lord, please give me the strength to see this through.”

The sky was brightening ahead. Sunrise was glorious. It was going to be a nice day.

I continued on to my destination and finished my business. All went well.

The Masstimes.com web site helped me find a Catholic Church in a nearby town, where I attended the Saturday vigil Mass and received Communion. Then, I headed for home. Once

again, The Lord rode with me for a while.

SPREADING THE WORD

Over the next several days I freely shared my story with others who I thought might appreciate it, not sure exactly why I felt the need to do so. Surprisingly, (or maybe not so surprisingly) a number of regular people just like me had experienced similar events. I guess that's why we're called to participate in the Church. It's a faith community. When God wants something done, more often than not, He'll have a little talk with one or more of His faithful about it. I've since come to learn that doing a little chore for God is a whole lot more important than closing a big business deal, winning the lottery, or even hitting the home run that wins the World Series.

Anyway, on Tuesday morning I found myself stopping by the Religious Education Office at one of the parishes I teach at, dropping off some paperwork and telling the director about my unusual experience. For some reason, I went into considerable detail about the abortion matter, carefully explaining all of the points Jesus so eloquently brought to my attention. My cell phone rang, so I excused myself and left the office, brushing past a woman who had been waiting outside. I had a business client emergency, so I waved goodbye and left without further discussion.

I arrived early for Wednesday's catechism class. As I walked in, the director asked me to step into the conference room for a moment. She went on to inquire if I had taken any notice of the woman whom I had briefly passed the day before. I replied that I had been busy with my client's phone call and hadn't even looked at her.

"What happened?" I asked.

She went on, "It turns out that Jane, (Jane is not her real name) is married, has a husband, two children and a successful career but has a very rough time with morning sickness and depression when she's pregnant. Jane discovered that she was pregnant yesterday and she wasn't happy about it. Jane thought that perhaps, a legal, inexpensive abortion might be the solution to her problem. She had a career in the health care field, but had no direct experience with abortion, (most hospitals will not allow abortion procedures to be performed on their premises) so she set off in search of advice. Jane tried to stop in at her local church, but everyone was out. She then drove around looking for either an abortion clinic or another church to go to for advice."

"Does Jane live nearby?" I asked. "No, that was one of the unusual things about her visit." "She lives in a town that's over 30 miles away. I have no idea how she found me. Also, I don't usually do counseling like this. It's not part of my job as REO Director. I'm amazed that Jane was even able to find my office."

"Jane and I had a very serious discussion. She told me that she couldn't imagine enduring another problem pregnancy and thought that perhaps an abortion was the right choice for her at this point in her life."

"What did you tell her?"

“That’s another thing I wanted to tell you about. Do you remember what we were talking about just before your cell phone rang yesterday?”

“Yeah, I was telling you what Jesus told me about abortion.”

“That’s right. Larry, it seems like you were sent here yesterday to give me a briefing containing all the information I would need to advise that troubled woman. Even the timing of your visit was extraordinary. You walked out. She walked in.”

“Wow!”

“So, what happened next?”

“I listened to her story, we talked for a while and then she asked what I thought she should do. That’s when I shared with her what Jesus shared with you. Then we cried together for a while. I told her we would help her with her pregnancy in every possible way. She said she felt much better and thought she would be able to make it through. We’ll all be praying for her. Plus, there are a number of women here at the parish that will get in touch with her and help her get whatever kind of medical or personal help she might need.”

We shared a brief moment of silent understanding, but there was no more time for talk. Catechism classes were ready to begin.

IN YOUR DREAMS, PAL!

The events of the past few days, starting with 9/11, sure didn’t make for easy sleeping. One of the things that was constantly on my mind (and in my prayers) was: What exactly does God expect me to do now?

I had just completed a project on the computer that took all night and finally got to sleep at 9:30 in the morning, only to wake up every half hour with a dream-like image stuck in my brain.

This process continued for about three hours. A little sleep, wake, mentally develop the image, then back to sleep.

Finally, I got up, went to my desk, grabbed a pencil and some blank paper and quickly scrawled something out. Then I went back to bed and slept undisturbed for four straight hours.

When I woke up, I couldn’t remember whether I had really gotten up to write something or had just dreamed about doing it. Walking over to the desk I came face to face with the image I had been dreaming about all day.

I re-created it on the computer for you, because I’m not much of an artist.

At the top of the page it said:

Just tell them the story and show them the picture!

And then, this:

*Baby John
Sent By God
To Prevent The 9/11 Tragedy*



Aborted
KILLED BY ABORTION
*September 11, 1974
New York, New York*

Please pay particular attention to the date and the location shown above.

FAST FORWARD NINE MONTHS

I never had the opportunity to see Jane again, but I do know that she made it through her pregnancy and delivered a fine, healthy baby.

It's not often that we are privileged to be able to recognize the hand of God interceding for us in everyday events, or to identify the small part we might play in it. I'm pretty sure this was one of those times.

Personally, I can't wait to see what God has planned for Jane's child!

*Never underestimate the awesome power of prayer. Remember to pray, watch, listen, believe and actively participate in the work and worship of God's Holy Catholic Church. Doing so will help you to know God, love Him, better understand His ways and be ready, if someday, He decides to ask you to do a little chore for Him! **May God, in His infinite love and mercy, continue to Bless us all.***

So, now you know the story. Did you get the picture?

Larry Douglas
September 2001