



Reflections

*International
Catholic Family Newsletter*

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Bringing Light Into a World of Darkness

Jesus in Mary's Womb Was a Person or Just Tissue?

Atheist Meets Jesus

Miraculous Healings

Thought for the Day: "It is not our diversity which divides us; it is not our ethnicity, or religion or culture that divides us. Since we have achieved our freedom, there can only be one division amongst us: between those who cherish democracy and those who do not."

Nelson Mandela. Nelson Mandela was a South African anti-apartheid activist who served as the first president of South Africa from 1994 to 1999. He was the country's first black head of state and the first elected in a fully representative democratic election.



Prayer for Today: A prayer by Billy Graham: Our Father and our God, we pray that in this period of crisis in our world that the Holy Spirit will use it to remind us of our need of Thee and our relationship with Thee and we pray that tonight if our relationship is not right that we'll make it right through Jesus Christ our Lord who came to die on the cross because He loved us. For we ask it in His Name. Amen.



Blessing to All:

By: Richard Pickard

God has designed us out of love. And has made all creation a wonderful gift to us, to enjoy, to explore and to ponder. Sometimes we forget about the loving gifts Our Father has laid out for us to see, hear and enjoy. The busyness of our lives is sometimes unavoidable. With work, kids, spouses, errors to run and so much more. We don't take time to look around us and enjoy the beauty of nature. The changing of the Seasons; the colors of the flowers; the sounds of birds happily chirping; the smile someone who we don't know gave us in the grocery store line and so much more.

The dignity of God's creation and the dignity He has built in every one of us, to respect each other and love and care for one another, sometimes gets lost.

To remind us of these things, God inspires artists, musicians, and sometimes raises up people from humble origins to help us along the way. God wants us to be free and happy on earth.

Satan has always wanted to destroy this world and the people in it out of hatred for the Creator. His eternal hate wants to find its way into people of power and political groups to steal the freedom and love we have for each other.

So many times, the color of a person's skin is used as a tinder box in our world. Racism is present, but it is not from God, but from Satan.

To combat this evil, God moves through the Holy Spirit to raise people to be our champions. You too, can be a champion for God. In your life, you will meet people that are down and out. You see the results of the induced poverty in the streets, in the run-down homes in which they live and in the sadness in the eyes of those found in slums or living on the street. They all have stories to tell of how they got there. But most people are too busy to see or help. We just forget.

Next time you see a street person, give them a smile and some money, so they can buy food and perhaps clothing if they need it. Be a champion for them.

Raise your voice when you see your country heading the wrong way. Socialism and Communism are but one small step apart. If you have the right to vote, please do so. If the vote has been taken away from you, then ask God to send a champion into your country. Let the champion raise their voices and help make changes.

One such man raised his voice in South Africa some years ago to bring attention to unjust laws governing his beloved country which were designed to separate citizens by the color of their skin.



Nelson Mandela was an ordinary man who became a great champion and political leader. He suffered at the hands of a political system which tried to prevent him from speaking out against the unjust laws that was forced upon his countrymen. He served years in horrible conditions in prison but never was his spirit broken. His background helped shape his belief in the dignity of **a person**. Mandela attended a Methodist church school growing up and was baptized in a small Methodist stone church in the Eastern Cape village of Qunu.

In his autobiography, "The Long Walk to Freedom" he talked of his early experiences with Christianity, praising its engagements with the society around him: **"The Church was as concerned with this world as the next: I saw that virtually all of the achievements of Africans seemed to have come about through the missionary work of the Church."**

¹Consequently, while attending the University of Fort Hare, an elite black university in Alice, Eastern Cape, Mandela became a member of the Students Christian Association and taught Bible classes on Sundays in nearby villages. Among other factors, it was Mandela's Christianity that steered him away from Communism and the class struggle that was spreading into South Africa in the 1940s. The lessons that Mandela learned about Communism and Dictatorship governments, made him convinced that religion and democracy go hand in hand.

¹ <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/nelson-mandela-and-his-faith/34956.htm>

We also find a great woman, Hansa Mehta, from India, who was a major force for freedom and human rights in her country and in the world.

She served as India's delegate to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights from 1947–52, and championed the case for a gender-neutral phrasing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The first line had read, "**All men** are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and was change to her efforts to "**All human beings** are born free and equal in dignity and right." This means also, **all unborn persons** have the right to be treated with dignity and justice.



Both Mandela and Metha knew the power and meaning of words. Words spoken and those written in laws should always represent honesty and reflect their true meaning.

The Unborn Jesus Was a Person

Take as an example the legalization of abortion in many countries. In America, it is interesting to note, in Roe v Wade, the question was raised was the unborn child a **citizen and a person under the law.** The decision of the High Court changed the meaning of **one word** in this famous case and thereby resulted in the murder of over 63 million unborn children in America.

Here is a brief except from the ruling...

"In Roe v. Wade, the State of Texas argued that "the fetus is **a 'person'** within the language and meaning of the **Fourteenth Amendment.**" To which Justice Harry Blackmun responded, "If this suggestion of personhood is established, the appellant's case, of course, collapses, for the ***fetus' right to life would then be guaranteed*** specifically by the Amendment." However, Justice Blackmun then came to the conclusion "that the word 'person,' as used in the Fourteenth Amendment, **does not include the unborn.**" The child in the womb was no longer a person, but just a piece of tissues and disposable.

If you call yourself a Christian, do you believe the unborn Jesus was a person **or not?**

The baby that Mary was carrying in her womb, is the Son of God and Our Savior. Jesus was alive in her womb and



waiting to be born. Was he a person? Or was He just a lump of tissue?

In the bible we hear God declare that the babies in the womb of Rebekah are people. See what God had to say.

"Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. God said, "There are two nations in your womb, your issue will be two rival peoples. One nation will have the mastery of the other, and the elder will serve the younger. When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. Gen 25:21-24

If God calls the unborn a person, then all those who support killing the unborn have been deceived.

Evil stands against logic from the time of the Garden of Eden. Satan told a lie to Eve and she believed the lie. That is what is happening all over the world. Lies upon lies, to do Satan's bidding to destroy all of God's creation.

History has taught us that freedom and respect for life cannot long survive unless it is based on moral foundations. Countries all over the world have fallen into moral decay. That is why Our Blessed Mother tells us in her apparitions in Medjugorje, to Pray, Pray, Pray.



In her message of October 25, 2022, she tells us straight-out what is happening in the world. "Dear children! The Most High permits me to be with you, and to be joy for you and the way in hope, because mankind has decided for death. That is why He sent me to keep instructing you that without God you do not have a future. Little children, be instruments of love for all those who have not come to know the God of love. Witness joyfully your faith and do not lose hope in a change of the human heart. I am with you and am blessing you with my motherly blessing. Thank you for having responded to my call.

The price of doing Satan's work has always been '**death**' from the beginning. In Romans 5:13 we see these words, "Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned."

Help Our Blessed Mother with your prayers to defeat Satan and all Satan's workers, spiritual and real. Each day pray a rosary for the world, who need the grace of God to **Come to the Light, and Out of the Darkness.**

FORMER ATHEIST TURNS TO JESUS CHRIST AFTER A NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE



BY KEVIN WILLIAMS

My interview with Howard Storm is below. What he saw in his Near-Death Experience (NDE) changed him forever. Howard was an Atheist before his NDE.

1. An Invitation to Hell from Strange Beings

[Howard Storm was in intense agony and dying.]

"Struggling to say goodbye to my wife, I wrestled with my emotions. Telling her that I loved her very much was as much of a goodbye as I could utter because of my emotional distress. Sort of relaxing and closing my eyes, I waited for the end.

While I was undergoing this stress, prayer or anything like that never occurred to me. I never once thought about it. If I mentioned God's name at all it was only as a profanity. For a time, there was a sense of being unconscious or asleep. I'm not sure how long it lasted, but I felt really strange, and I opened my eyes. To my surprise I was standing up next to the bed, and I was looking at my body laying in the bed. My first reaction was, 'This is crazy! I can't be standing here looking down at myself. That's not possible.'

Now knowing what was happening, I became upset. I started yelling and screaming at my wife, and she just sat there like a stone. She didn't look at me, she didn't move – and I kept screaming profanities to get her to pay attention. I wanted this to be a dream, and I kept saying to myself, "This has got to be a dream."

But I knew that it wasn't a dream. Then I heard my name. I heard, "Howard, Howard – come here."

Wondering, at first, where it was coming from, I discovered that it was originating in the doorway. There were different voices calling me. I asked who they were, and they said, "We are here to take care of you. We will fix you up. Come with us."

Asking, again, who they were, I asked them if they were doctors and nurses. They responded, "Quick, come see. You'll find out."

As I asked them questions, they gave evasive answers. They kept giving me a sense of urgency, insisting that I should step through the doorway. With some reluctance I stepped into the hallway, and in the hallway, I was in a fog, or a haze. It was a light-colored haze. It wasn't a heavy haze. I could see my hand, for example, but the people who were calling me were 15 or 20 feet ahead, and I couldn't see them clearly. They were more like silhouettes, or shapes, and as I moved toward them, they backed off into the haze. As I tried to get close to them to identify them, they quickly withdrew deeper into the fog. So, I had to follow into the fog deeper and deeper. These strange beings kept urging me to come with them.

Now things were worse, as I was forced by a mob of unfriendly and cruel people toward some unknown destination in the darkness. They began shouting and hurling insults at me, demanding that I hurry along.

By this time, it was almost complete darkness, and I had the sense that instead of there being twenty or thirty, there were an innumerable host of them. Each one seemed set on coming in for the sport they got from hurting me. My attempts to fight back only provoked greater merriment. They began to physically humiliate me in the most degrading ways.

Exactly what happened was ... and I'm not going to try and explain this. From inside of me I felt a voice, my voice, say, "Pray to God." My mind responded to that, "I don't pray. I don't know how to pray." I am lying on the ground in the darkness surrounded by what appeared to be dozens if not

hundreds and hundreds of vicious creatures who had just torn me up. The situation seemed utterly hopeless, and I seemed beyond any possible help whether I believed in God or not. The voice again told me to pray to God. It was a dilemma since I didn't know how. The voice told me a third time to pray to God. I started saying things like, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want ... God bless America" and anything else that seemed to have a religious connotation. And these people went into a frenzy, as if I had thrown boiling oil all over them. They began yelling and screaming at me, telling me to quit, that there was no God, and no one could hear me. While they screamed and yelled obscenities, they also began backing away from me as if I were poison

2. A Rescue from Hell by Jesus Christ

Then a most unusual thing happened. I heard very clearly, once again in my own voice, something that I had learned in nursery Sunday School. It was the little song, "Jesus loves me, yes I know ..." and it kept repeating. I don't know why, but all of a sudden, I wanted to believe that. When I did that, I saw, off in the darkness somewhere, the tiniest little star. Not knowing what it was, I presumed it must be a comet or a meteor, because it was moving rapidly. Then I realized it was coming toward me. It was getting very bright, rapidly. When the light came near, its radiance spilled over me, and I just rose up – not with my effort – I just lifted up. Then I saw – and I saw this very plainly – I saw all my wounds, all my tears, all my brokenness, melt away. And I became whole in this radiance. What I did was cry uncontrollably. I was crying, not out of sadness, but because I was feeling

things that I had never felt before in my life. Another thing happened. Suddenly I knew a whole bunch of things. I knew things ... I knew that this light, this radiance, knew me. I don't know how to explain to you that I knew it knew me, I just did. As a matter of fact, I understood that it knew me better than my mother or father did. The luminous entity that embraced me knew me intimately and began to communicate a tremendous sense of knowledge. I knew that he knew everything about me and I was being unconditionally loved and accepted.

The light conveyed to me that it loved me in a way that I can't begin to express. It loved me in a way that I had never known that love could possibly be. He was a concentrated field of energy, radiant in splendor indescribable, except to say goodness and love. This was more loving than one can imagine. I knew that this radiant being was powerful. It was making me feel so good all over. I could feel its light on me – like very gentle hands around me. We started going faster and faster, out of the darkness. Embraced by the light, feeling wonderful and crying, I saw off in the distance something that looked like the picture of a galaxy, except that it was larger and there were more stars than I had seen on Earth. There was a great center of brilliance. In the center there was an enormously bright concentration. Outside the center countless millions of spheres of light were flying about entering and leaving what was a great being-ness at the center.

(Note: Howard believes his friend was Jesus.)

Facing all the splendor made me acutely aware of my lowly condition. My response was: "No, you've made a mistake, put me back." And he said, "We don't make mistakes. You belong."

Then he called out in a musical tone to the luminous entities who surrounded the great center. Several came and circled around us. During what follows some came and went but normally there were five or six and sometimes as many as eight with us. I was still crying. One of the first things these marvelous beings did was to ask, all with thought, "Are you afraid of us?" I told them I wasn't. They said that they could turn their brilliance down and appear as people, and I told them to stay as they were. They were the most beautiful, the most ...

Everywhere around us were countless radiant beings, like stars in the sky, coming and going.

3. The Life Review of Howard Storm

Next, they wanted to talk about my life. To my surprise my life played out before me, maybe six or eight feet in front of me, from beginning to end.

The life review was very much in their control, and they showed me my life, but not from my point of view. I saw me in my life and this whole thing was a lesson, even though I didn't know it at the time.

I could feel their feelings of sorrow and suffering, or joy, as my life's review unfolded. They didn't say that something was bad or good, but I could feel it.

What they responded to, was how I had interacted with other people. That was the long and short of it. Unfortunately, most of my interactions with other people didn't measure up with how I should have interacted, which was in a loving way. Whenever I did react during my life in a loving way they rejoiced.

I got to see when my sister had a bad night one night, how I went into her bedroom and put my arms around her. Not saying anything, I just lay there with my arms around her. As it turned out that experience was one of the biggest triumphs of my life.

The entire life's review would have been emotionally destructive, and would have left me a psychotic person, if it hadn't been for the fact that my friend, and my friend's friends, were loving me during the unfolding of my life. I could feel that love.

When the review was finished, they asked, "Do you want to ask any questions?" and I had a million questions.

I asked, for example, "What about the Bible?"

They responded, "What about it?"

I asked if it was true, and they said it was. Asking them why it was that when I tried to read it, all I saw were contradictions, they took me back to my life's review again – something that I had overlooked. They showed me, for the few times I had opened the Bible, that I had read it with the idea of finding contradictions and problems. I was trying to prove to myself that it wasn't worth reading. I observed to them that the Bible wasn't clear to me. It didn't make sense. They told me that it contained spiritual truth, and that I had to read it spiritually in order to understand it. It should be read prayerfully. My friends informed me that it was not like other books. They also told me, and I later found out this was true, that when you read it prayerfully, it talks to you. It reveals itself to you. And you don't have to work at it anymore.

My friends answered lots of questions in funny ways. They really knew the whole tone of what I asked them, even before I got the questions out. When I thought of questions in my head, they really understood them.

Asking them if there was life on other planets, their surprising answer was that the universe was full of life."

Before his near-death experience, Howard Storm (www.howardstorm.com) was a Professor of Art at Northern Kentucky University, was not a very pleasant man by his own admission. He was an avowed atheist and was hostile to every form of religion and those who practiced it. His near-death experience is one of the most profound, if not the most profound, afterlife

experience I have ever documented. His life was so immensely changed after his near-death experience, he resigned as a professor and devoted his time attending the United Theological Seminary to **become a United Church of Christ minister.**

Miraculous Healing Testimonies

Louise is a woman who had cancer and was heading for her second cancer surgery. Here is her true account.

Many years ago, I had a visit from our Blessed Mother. I was around 33 yrs of age, and I was going in for my second cancer operation, which was just 12 hours away. I was very scared and found myself alone in a very dark room. I cried for hours asking God who will look after my teen aged kids. They had lost their dad at 28 years of age. I must have cried for hours, which is something I never do. Why me? I asked a million times. I prayed to all of Heaven. I bit my fingernails so short; they were bleeding. It was so cold in this room. I tried to pull the sheets up to warm myself, but I couldn't. So, I crossed my hands and put them on top of the sheets.

I have a habit, when I am stressed, of closing my eyes and talking to myself. I told myself to stop crying and thinking about the worst. After some time, I felt myself calming down a bit, and then a feeling of peace came over me. I opened my eyes, and in this darkened room, high up in the corner, was our Blessed Mother. She seemed to be about 4 ft. tall. As I looked at Her, I wasn't afraid, because I knew who She was. As I continued to stare at Her, surrounded by a beautiful luminous light, She became life size and was at the end of my bed. I cannot describe Her beauty. Exquisitely beautiful, Immaculate. There just aren't words to adequately describe Her beauty. Her long brown hair was visible from the side of Her vale. She started to talk to me, and put Her hand, surrounded by this luminous light over mine. I looked up, and She smiled and said, "Everything will be alright, from now on.", and then She was gone. Needless to say, I never went to sleep that night. The next morning the doctors came to check on me and I must have appeared very different. They asked me what happened. I told them I had a vision of

Our Blessed Mother. The cancer was completely gone. I did not have the surgery, and I have never been back to the cancer hospital since.

This experience with Our Lady did happen, and I will take this memory to my death. Our Lady is real! Praying the Rosary is what I can do for Her and Her Son. She restored my health but most importantly, my faith in the Church. I am so grateful for this miracle. I have experienced so much more over the years. Pray, pray, pray. Our Lady is with all of Her children, all the time. I hope this testimony helps Medjugorje. It is a true story hopefully you can share with others. Thank you, God bless you. Louise



She was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a cancer of the plasma cells in the bone marrow, which is considered incurable. But with Jesus-centered faith, prayer, and a powerful dream, God brought a miraculous healing that confounded her doctors.

“They said I had 3-5 years to live,” says Tecla Miceli. “It was dreadful and I was scared to death,” she says.

“I had a whole week to think and pray and was petrified all the while,” Tecla recounts. “I didn’t know if I wanted chemo or if I should just die naturally. I was crying all the time.”

One evening son Gary had dinner with his mother because he was flying out of Orange County the next morning.

After their meal he said, “Mom, let’s kneel down and pray.” They both knelt down together. “Mom, the psalms are full of God’s promises. I want you to read all of them and stand on God’s promises. We will be praying for you.”

Tecla spent the entire week in her patio reading the psalms and praying. “That’s all I did. I prayed that God would heal me.”

She poured out her heart to God: *I know I have done it all, I’ve been married, have children, grandchildren, finished college, but I’m not ready to*

die yet. If you heal me, I will tell of your miracle to anyone that wants to listen, she told God.

That night – shortly before her bone marrow test – she had a remarkable dream. “I was outside a market and noticed I had a cart filled to the brim with long loaves of bread. I tried to give some away but only some would take it.”

Then she found herself dangling from a foot-wide ledge, 30 feet above the ground. “I looked down, thinking I’m going to fall. All these people were looking up. I was hanging from a ledge, but my hand was holding a big thick nail with my right hand.”

She thought she was going to fall and would surely die. “Then I realized the nail I’m holding is slowly creating a crevice and is sliding down. It was slowly bringing me down to the floor. When I reached the floor, I cried because it was a miracle.

“It’s a miracle, don’t you know it’s a miracle,” she cried out when she landed safely. “God is real. Don’t you believe me?”

She took her shopping cart and started offering bread to people. Some took the bread and others did not.

Tecla awakened the next morning feeling perfect peace. “I understood the bread to be the Bread of Life,” she says. *Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”* (John 6:35)

A few days later, Tecla had the bone marrow test, a painful procedure that required a strong sedative, but she woke up peacefully and surprisingly, had no pain after the test.

Gary and Tecla went to meet with the doctor to go over the results. Her first chemotherapy was set to begin the following Monday.



The oncologist had an unusual expression on his face as their appointment began. “You know how problematic this industry has become,” he began. “Look at this. I’m curious. I already know we’re at 27-32, so she’s at full-blown cancer.

"But look at this test I took from the spine...this came back at 5 or 6. That's impossible. Blood plasma never retracts. It is an axiom of medicine. They must have made a mistake at the lab," he said, shaking his head in disbelief.

The doctor looked at them both with curious amazement and then said, "In 25 years of practice I have never seen anything like this before."

The doctor finally admitted that all her numbers were down, lower than when she first got diagnosed. Tecla began to cry and Gary was amazed.

"The doctor called it an anomaly — his way of explaining away a miracle," Gary recalls. "But he too started crying because he was really moved by it."

When the doctor regained his composure he said, "You are free to go and live your life...I will continue to monitor your blood tests."

From that point forward, her tests were all clean.

A Day Before Surgery This Baby Is Miraculously Cured

"It was a miracle," Tecla exclaims. "Both my son and daughter and their families had each of their churches praying for me all that time and I want to thank them all.

It remains a mystery. Casey quickly noticed something was off with her newborn son Hunter when he was just 2 days old. "He could only eat about a half-ounce of formula at a time instead of the normal two ounces," Casey said. "Any more than that and he would spit everything back up, or any pressure on his stomach would make him spit it back up."

Doctors ordered X-rays and discovered a mass. The mass was so huge it took up about two-thirds of Hunter's stomach. "They actually showed us where it was and you could feel it. And that was probably the most heartbreaking part of it, is actually being able to feel the mass in his stomach that's not letting him eat," said his father, Jake.

The mass was life-threatening because Hunter couldn't eat enough with it. He had to be sent to Denver, Colorado, for immediate surgery. Hunter was promptly airlifted. The family asked on Facebook for the prayers of friends and family .

"I didn't know what to think, I didn't know what to say. You don't expect to see that in your baby that's 2 days old," Casey said. Doctors said if the surgery was successful, it would be two to six months before Hunter could go home. The night before his surgery, Casey began to feed him. "I was in the room by myself and I fed Hunter and he drank the whole two-ounce bottle, and he was perfectly fine," explained Casey.

She didn't want to get her hopes up, but after an MRI before surgery, something unthinkable happened. "A while later, the doctor came in and she had a strange look on her face, which scared me to death. It's like something happened, you know, and it probably is not good," Casey recalled. "But she came in and she said, 'We just got done with the MRI and I don't know what they saw, but it's not there now.'" The mass was gone. Casey and Jake even have the medical records to show that it had disappeared from one day to the next.

"They couldn't explain it and they didn't really attempt to explain it. I just knew he'd been healed. I knew the Lord healed him. I remember looking at Casey and we just broke down and both started crying," Jake said.



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Bringing Light Into A World In Darkness



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