

A little lesson in trust

My husband thought he saw something furry run under the fridge. Maybe it was a trick of the light. Maybe.

A few days later, a mouse brazenly dashed through the dining room and living room, leading us on a wild, noisy family chase around and around the space. We toppled furniture, threw towels, ran into one another, and never got close to catching anything.

By the time the search had ended and we collapsed into bed, there was no denying it. We had a mouse in the house.

In the weeks that followed we made sure the pantry was impenetrable, purchased and set every kind of trap on the market, and turned to an exterminator who became like a member of the family.

Still the mouse ran free.

Everyone around us was full of kind, well-intentioned advice. Sprinkle peppermint along the baseboards, they told me. No mouse can resist peanut butter. What you really need is a cat. More than a few friends assured me that there had to be families of mice in the house.

“It’s never just one, you know,” they would say cheerfully.

I was fairly sure it was just one – one brazen creature that regularly meandered into the dining room to find crumbs on the carpet that our vacuum and I couldn’t see. But I couldn’t confirm that.

Whether it was one mouse or 100, we hadn’t been able to catch a thing. Day after day, the traps remained empty. The mouse blithely scampered from room to room, but had no interest in going near the traps, which featured a smorgasbord of sweet, salty and sticky treats.

“God, please take the mouse away from our house,” I prayed one night with our boys.

“No, God,” one of them contradicted me. “Please let the mouse stay because I really want a pet. And please make all the mousetraps magically disappear.”

God clearly heard that prayer. The mouse stayed, frolicking around the house, relaxing in the middle of the room or sniffing around the kitchen as we tiptoed around him.

It was a true test. We were doing everything we could to capture this little creature, but we just couldn't. Our exterminator came every few days, trying different tactics and treats, marveling with us at the cleverness of this uncatchable mouse.

And he was clever. Mice are, you know. A tiny mouse can squeeze through a hole the width of a pencil. We talked about the mouse, prayed about it, researched ways to get rid of it, and invested money in trying to capture it.

As the weeks dragged on, we finally decided the mouse simply would not be caught. My husband started throwing out the traps, one by one. We had to accept that we might always have a mouse scampering around the house. We weren't happy about it, but we had done all we could. The situation was out of our hands.

You might think that I would already know that I am not entirely in control of my life. You would expect me to realize that there are times when you surrender yourself to a situation and turn it over to God. Still, I can always use another opportunity to learn that all over again – and this cheeky little mouse seemed to be content to be my teacher.

Sometimes the large, life-changing moments are the ones that show us we need to turn everything over to God. Sometimes it's the flat tire or a snowstorm derailing our plans. But each time we have an opportunity to come away trusting Jesus a little bit more.

“A humble soul does not trust itself, but places all its confidence in God,” St. Faustina said. It sounds deceptively simple, but it can be so hard – especially in situations far more troubling than dealing with a mouse in the house.

We did eventually catch the mouse – with a single trap we had forgotten. We couldn't take any credit. It just happened when the time was right. By then we had

learned quite a bit about mice, but perhaps also a little about patience, faith and trust.