

Miracles are all around us

By Rita Buettner

Active little boys always have scrapes and bumps and bruises. One night our first-grader and I were sitting together talking as he marveled at how his skin keeps healing, over and over.

"I don't understand," he said. "How does it happen? Where does the cut go?"

I started trying to explain about new skin cells growing, reaching back to biology lessons I apparently didn't retain. As I struggled my way through the science, I was struck by how incredible the process is - and how I have been taking it for granted for years.

"Isn't it amazing," I said to him, "how God made our bodies to heal like that?"

When you think about it, it really is a miracle - just one of many, many, many miracles we experience every day in our ordinary, yet extraordinary lives. The air we breathe, the sun coming up every morning, the tiny seed that becomes a tree, the love between a man and a woman that welcomes a child - there are numerous miracles we encounter all the time.

Miracles have been on my mind lately, especially since I spoke with our friend Kate Mahoney about her miracle - documented by the Vatican - that led to the beatification of St. Marianne Cope.

I first met Kate when she was working with my husband at her alma mater - and his - Washington College in Chestertown. I knew some of her story, but I mostly knew Kate as a friend and colleague of my husband's. But recently she wrote a book, "The Misfit Miracle Girl: Candid Reflections," and I reached out to ask her about it - and find out how it feels to be the recipient of a miracle, a miracle that helped raise someone to sainthood.

"People have very specific beliefs around miracles. They either elevate them, or believe they are coincidence or circumstance," Kate said. "A lot of people believe miracles are everywhere. But sometimes miracles can throw people out of balance."



Kate Mahoney, center, is pictured circa 2008 with her father, John, since deceased, and her mother, Mary. (Courtesy Kate Mahoney)

In 1992, Kate was only 14 when doctors found a malignant tumor in her abdomen the size of a basketball. After chemotherapy, her organs started failing one by one, until there was very little hope for her recovery.

A Franciscan nun approached Kate's parents to ask if they would be willing to pray to Franciscan Mother Marianne Cope, who had died in 1918, to ask her to intercede

for their daughter. People of many faiths who learned about Kate's illness participated in prayer chains around the world, all asking Mother Marianne to intercede. And Kate recovered, though her recovery could not be explained medically and she still had a long road ahead of her.

Today Mother Marianne Cope is a saint in the Catholic Church. Kate's collection of essays is being published as an e-book Dec. 18 and in print in 2017.

"Honestly I am the person who thinks everything is miraculous," said Kate, who lives in central New York state. "My miracle was my recovery from multi-system organ failure, but beyond that it has to be the caregivers that I had in the hospital - people of all faiths and backgrounds - who worked together. All of that was miraculous."

My conversation with Kate challenged me to consider how and where I see miracles in our world. And lately I have been finding them everywhere, in nature, in my family, and in the amazing answer to so many prayers - even when the answer isn't always what I expected. The Vatican will never document any of those miracles, but they are miracles to me.

As C.S. Lewis said, "Miracles are a retelling in small letters of the very same story which is written across the whole world in letters too large for some of us to see."

To my little boy, the healing of a scraped knee is as miraculous as Kate's healing - one that doctors cannot explain with science. But though we might be more in awe of the Vatican-documented miracle, the healing under that Band-Aid also gives us a glimpse into God's awesome power.

Read more commentary [here](#).