

More miracles await

Miracles do happen.

Two weeks ago I wrote about my cat, Pharaoh, who was diagnosed with lymphoma and feline leukemia. Various veterinarians suggested we “put the cat down.” The cat’s “mother,” the lady with whom Pharaoh lives, wanted to go ahead with chemotherapy. By the third treatment, the fluid around his lungs disappeared. So had the tumor. Pharaoh is on the road to recovery.

To call it a miracle may seem a bit exaggerated. But, as I have said so often, life itself is a miracle, and to extend a life is to be part of a miracle.

In truth, even the miracles that Jesus worked were extensions of life. The widow’s son, Jairus’s daughter, Lazarus, all three were all brought back to life by Jesus. Yet, none of them is still alive today in bodily form.

Father Raymond Brown, the great Scripture scholar, contrasted the “resurrection” of Lazarus with the resurrection of Jesus. When Lazarus came forth from the tomb, he was bound hand and foot with burial cloths. When Jesus was raised from the dead, his body was gone and the burial cloths were left behind. Lazarus still had the cloths because he would die again, and would need them again. Jesus once raised from the dead left his cloths behind. Jesus would never die again.

This is not to say that the little miracles of life are unimportant. They help our faith when our faith is challenged. They reflect the power of prayer. Every prayer is answered, some in time, and others in eternity. However, the prayers answered in time give us more confidence that there will be surer answers in eternity.

What prayers did I say? Most of my prayers were directly to the Lord. Sometimes I prayed with the power of the Lord, telling the dark forces of cancer to leave my cat just as Jesus drove out the demons of his day. We have God’s spirit within us. We can indeed act with God’s power.

I obviously called upon various canonized saints. St. Francis of Assisi was first. Is he not the patron saint of all animals? I called upon my personal patron saints – St.

Joseph; St. Francis Xavier (my baptismal middle name saint) and St. Ignatius (my confirmation patron). The saints were friends of God on earth, who now share an eternal friendship in heaven. It's nice to have friends in "high places."

Yes, of course, I prayed to Mary.

On various occasions, Pharaoh would hide under the bed. Often I would just lie on the floor next to the bed and reach my arm and hand under the bed and scratch his ears or chin. Even in the darkest of times, Pharaoh could still manage a gentle purr.

While petting him, I would often recite the Memorare: "Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known, that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto you, O Virgin of Virgins, my Mother! To you I come. Before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petition but hear and answer me. Amen."

Would not the woman who bore Jesus in a stablecave where animals lived be receptive to a prayer for animals? Might Jesus not have learned some of his tender images of life from his mother? I always loved Jesus telling us: "The sparrow does not fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. Are you not worth more than many sparrows?"

My love for animals takes me back to my childhood. My childlike prayers take me to Jesus, who promised that the kingdom of God belongs to the childlike.

Jesus also reminded us that if we know how to give good things to our children, how much greater goodness our Father has reserved to give to us. Pharaoh is still alive. A miracle in this world of time and space.

But even greater miracles and even more life await all of us in eternity!