

Prayers for Teresa

What can I tell you about Teresa? She's 5 years old and was born in China on Christmas Day. She loves princesses, dance class, school, and playing dress-up with her sisters. She has a winning smile and a magical personality.

She also has a complex heart condition. When her parents, Ann and Ed Bartlinski, adopted her in July 2010, they knew she would need a heart transplant. What they didn't realize was that her lungs had been so damaged due to her heart condition that Teresa wouldn't be eligible for a heart transplant unless her lungs were stronger.

Teresa's parents sought second and third and fourth opinions, praying each time that the next doctor would have a different answer. Instead, they were told to take her home and let her enjoy life.

So they turned to prayer—asking for a miracle, and asking Blessed Pope John Paul II for his intercession. Through the Internet, thousands of people from around the world have started praying for Teresa. Ann posts updates to a “Pray for Teresa B” page on Facebook and adds to her family blog. When Teresa started asking to “marry Jesus” through the Eucharist, her parents received permission for her to make her First Communion early. She was absolutely aglow after receiving Jesus for the first time.



Even before the Bartlinskis first saw Teresa's photo and started the process of adopting her, people were advocating online for her adoption and praying for her to find a family. And she did find a family—a beautiful family with a mother, a father, three brothers, and five sisters—four of whom were also adopted from China. And she slipped right into her family as if she had always been their daughter and sister.

John and I are among many who have been praying for Teresa since before she came home. Our parish—and the Bartlinskis'—is St. Mark's in Catonsville, where Teresa's

name—first in Chinese and now in English—has been read in the Prayer of the Faithful for more than two years.

During those two years, the Bartlinskis have received some good news. Teresa's lungs have responded to treatment, and Ann and Ed now have some hope that she might be able to receive a heart transplant. The fact that those conversations are happening at all is a miracle in and of itself—and not one to be taken lightly. This week, however, we are storming Heaven with renewed purpose.

On Friday Teresa will go under anesthesia for an MRI and a heart catheterization—and her parents will find out whether she will be listed for a heart transplant. It's a critical time for Teresa—and for her family, who love her so dearly. And so, with Ann's gratitude in advance, I invite you to pray for her sweet girl, so full of joy, so unaware that she is sick, and so in need of a miracle.

Prayer can move mountains.

Prayer can give a family strength and courage for the journey ahead.

And prayer can give a beautiful little girl a chance at living a full life.