

Ultreya Witness Talk 02/11/2022

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of us your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth your spirit and we shall be created, and You shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray:

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, instructs the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolations.

Through Christ our Lord, AMEN.

My name is Gunna Casanova. My husband Javier and I worship at St Peter Catholic Church in Jupiter. I made Women's Cursillo #59, at our Lady of Florida in August of 2016, and I sat at the table of Our Lady of the Eucharist.

In the spirit of Valentine's Day and February being the month of love, according to my husband, I am going to tell you an incredible love story that I encountered. This story has elements of a good a love story, much love received, love given, miracle and betrayal.

The Betrayal

Let's jump to the genesis of this story, and like many love stories it includes betrayal. Mine came in the form of a four-legged stranger.

On a Monday afternoon, in late September. I was working in the front yard at my home, doing the typical yard work that every home owner enjoys sooooo much. I noticed my next-door neighbor, a teenage girl, walking their new dog. I thought it was a perfect opportunity to meet the dog with its owner. I called to the girl and asked about the dog's name and if I could greet the dog. After telling me his name, she went on to say that the dog was 'really friendly'. Feeling confident I approached the dog, and low and behold, he launched forward and went right for my face. I felt his teeth sink into my face and press against my bones. When the girl pulled him away, I sensed the skin tearing off my face. I stepped back, almost falling and applied pressure to the face, still wearing the dirty gloves I used for the yard work. The dog just sat down and now - looked friendly. The poor girl was horrified at the sight, but had presence of mind to call the ambulance. There was blood all over the driveway, which looked like a crime scene. My clothes were covered in blood. The oozing blood from the cut of the right eyelid made it hard for me to see. I ran the tongue through the upper lip and felt it split open. The right cheek was a mess and I prayed I would not need a skin

graft. The ambulance arrived and I was loaded up. In order to examine my injury the paramedic asked me to remove the towel from my face, and his initial response was not encouraging “Oh, you need a plastic surgeon”. After confirming that a plastic surgeon was on-call at Jupiter Medical Center, I was bee lined over there.

Chapter 2

Angelic Messengers

Ok, it’s maybe over dramatization to liken the next two people in the story to true angles, or messengers from God, but they were for sure gifts or grace from God.

The first one was my handsome cupid. As God’s provision had it, I noticed Javier’s car following the ambulance on the way to the hospital. I immediately felt ease that my cupid or wingman was with me. Another providence was that the day I arrived at the ER was the first day they had opened for visitors since start of Covid. What a blessing to have Javier next to me through this traumatic experience. Full of love, encouragement and taking charge, which is his specialty.

The next gift was Dr. Bauermeister, the plastic surgeon - calm, confident and skilled surgeon. When he arrived in the ER, we were both taken back by his

youthful look. We joked that his dad must have dropped him off. Javier tried to be really slick and make it appear as small talk by asking him about his training. His answer was impressive, and I think Dr. Bauermeister totally saw through his slickness.

At the start of the surgery of my face, Javier asked Dr. Bauermeister if he could say a prayer. I assume the doc thought it would be a quick prayer and gave his ok. Little did he know that for the next 3 hours Javier would go through all the mysteries of the Rosary, Chapel of Divine Mercy, and Novena to Our Lady of Medjugore. Javier gave me his Rosary beads to hold in my hand. It was powerful to tighten the grip of the Rosary beads, especially towards the end when the anesthesia was wearing off and I felt the tucking from the suturing. The prayers kept me calm and diverted my attention from the pain. At the end Dr. Bauermeister noted "It is impressive how many prayers you know!". I believe that through our prayers did not only I receive the gift of Dr. Bauermeister, but also did he receive a grace from God.

At the two month follow up visit, Dr. Bauermeister commented "It is a miracle that all the skin flaps survived, and no infection developed. I really thought a skin graft was inevitable". I looked at him and said with a smile and appreciation "That I was in very capable hands." He replied humbly that his

skillset had little to do with it, but instead all the prayers that evening. The little did he know that besides our prayers there was a whole host of prayers from family, friends, neighbors and strangers. Which brings me to the last chapter of this short story about an amazing love and miraculous healing.

Chapter 3

God's Unfathomable Love

What comes next was such great outpouring of love and generosity. I experienced God's love beyond measure through my family, friends and the community. Many of you here tonight are part of the story and witnesses to the miracle. My words of thanks will never be sufficient to convey the deep feeling of gratitude I have.

In my hour of need, I reached out to my Cursillo grouping sisters for prayers. In the ER Javier would read their texts of encouragement which gave me strength. Later in the evening, when I arrived at home my son greeted me along with my daughter who had driven down from Orlando. In the days to come, both helped Javier with my wound care and cooking meals. They also witnessed God's love through the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick when Fr. Wesler came to our house.

In the days that followed, my family and I were recipients of such love in the actions of the community. To mention few, my grouping sisters, offered prayers, meals, adoration and visits at the house. My neighbors brought meals, sent cards and flowers, and called to offer help. My co-cowers sent flowers and meals. Javier's boss cleared him of the schedule and his co-workers offered kind words and flowers – yes, I received a lot of flowers. The Cursillo community sent cards with mass intentions, cards of encouragement, meals and prayers. My neighbor's bible study group was praying for my healing. Finally, my family and friends in Iceland were praying and sending support. Through this horrific experience, my brothers and sisters were vehicles of God's grace.

Lastly, it delights me to share with you on this feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes how God's care and healing came through Holy Water from Lourdes. We had gone on a pilgrimage to Lourdes in 2019 and brought Holy water back, which Javier anointed me with it several times after the accident. Of course the miracle came through our faith in Jesus and the intercession of His mother - the water was just a reminder of His healing power.

In the end, the greatest gift was to experience God's unfathomable love for me and to remind me of the great commandment instructed by Jesus in the Gospel of John 15:12 quote: "This is my commandment: love one another as I love

you”, end of quote. My Cursillo community along with many others lived this commandment by their actions, and I am called to do the same. Thank you for being part of the story. God bless you richly.

De Colores