



Angel's Unaware

By Lisa Hoffman

It was April 2017 and our first time at the Abbey. There were only a few people at the evening compline service. We entered the sanctuary in reverence and awe at its beauty. I love the aroma of the

Lord. We felt God's presence. We were drawn into the Lord's chamber where monks prayed with voices like angels. Our innocence of Catholic traditions humbled us to tears of joy. At the conclusion of the service, we were shyly asked by a lady without a companion if we'd kindly give her a ride down the hill. She wanted to walk back up the Stations of the Cross in prayer. It was dark outside, we understood. We rode down the hill in silence. She got out of our car with a thank you. That could have been the end of it.

But my husband heard a voice that repeated the verse in Hebrews 13:2, "Don't forget hospitality towards strangers least you entertain angels unaware." We got out of our car and respectfully followed her. We prayed as well.

At the top of the hill, in front of the 12th station, she turned and waited for us to approach. With a slight smile she said, "I think I'm supposed to talk to you." Here it comes! My heart was pounding in spiritual anticipation. Something wonderful was about to happen.

Without hesitation we introduced ourselves. Bob and Lisa from Missouri. We'd come three months ago to live with and care for my 93-year-old mother until her passing, however long. It was more difficult than I expected. I was not prepared for the onset of her dementia. It was both duty and love that brought us here. I poured out bits and pieces of my anxiety and distress over caring for my mother. I had nowhere to turn for help but to the Lord. We

were a long way from home and family. My mother needed me but didn't want me. And then something rather miraculous happened!

She was from Alaska, just visiting family. She said her name was Christine. I knew she was sent by God. She listened to my woes with the understanding of Christ. She told me things that seemed to come directly from the Lord. She had advice for my situation that I hadn't even shared. She told me I was God's daughter and he was proud of me. That was big! My mother had just sent us away, back to Missouri. Christine told me a little parable about playing Scrabble with her grandfather and the importance of remembering the little pleasures when caring for the elderly. Christine had no idea that we had just played Scrabble with my mother. She had smiled for the first time in months.

As we talked, Bob had to step back and watch in amazement. He told me later he saw a glow surrounding us. He felt he had to look the other way. The encounter was too personal. Christine said things that deeply touched my heart. I felt the touch of the Holy Spirit when she took my hands in prayer. My legs trembled, the tears streamed down my face while the joy overwhelmed me. I was in the presence of an angel of God, a messenger.

By God's grace, He had orchestrated our three lives to come together on Good Friday, to make our first time on the Holy Hill of the Abbey a conversion of heavenly magnitude, to have a girl from Alaska touch my soul with the wisdom of the Lord. I was more than comforted. I was kissed by an Angel.

As we parted ways Christine said only three words to my husband, "And you, Bob." It made little sense to us at the time. But the Lord reveals things in His time, not ours. As in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 "For everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven."

We were at the beginning of a Lenten Journey that would last for several years. We prayed twice a day for a year with the monks at Mount Angel Abbey. My husband and I walk with the

Lord every day, and we are blessed in ways beyond our understanding. We were being prepared for a dedication to submit to God's will with complete faith and trust in him. As I reflect on the last few years, I realized the glory of God guides me through the Lenten seasons of my life. Mother took the Lord's hand during this time 2 years ago. My loving husband Bob, was touched by God with a major stroke blocking the right side of his brain and lives to tell of his miracle and Lazarus. Lent for me is not just about personal sacrifice. It's a willingness to have compassion for the sacrifice of God's only son and the love with which it was intended.

Our journey, since that moment with God's angel, has been a faith walk on the path to God's Heavenly Kingdom. Lent is a journey forward. Toward the cross. Toward the resurrection.

