

Mercy Story Eleven – November

*“Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.  
For the sake of His sorrowful Passion have Mercy on us and on the whole world.”*

**“When this chaplet is said by the bedside of a dying person, God’s anger is placated and unfathomable Mercy envelopes the soul.”** (St. Faustina’s Diary, 811)

It seemed hopeless. Everyone knew Bob couldn’t last much longer. Was it Fear? Denial? Pride? Guilt? Whatever it was, it stood squarely in the path of facing the reality that he was about to die. Most of his family didn’t seem to care. They weren’t facing it either. Only one of his children came to visit him in the hospice room at the hospital. It was too far outside their comfort zone.

But his wife cared. And so did a colleague from work. And so did one brother and sister-in-law. But nothing penetrated his barrier. At any hint of prayer or any suggestion of death, he brushed them angrily aside, closed himself off, and shut down. And Death drew one step closer.

His colleague, who went to Mass daily, somewhat in desperation asked the priest to offer Mass that evening for the dying man, that he would open his heart and mind to God while he still could. “He’s a good man,” she told him. “He’s made some bad mistakes in his personal life, but he really cares about his students. Still, I’ve never known him to practise any religion.”

So that evening they celebrated Mass for Bob. And the next morning the priest received a call from the hospital. “Bob wants to see a priest.”

Bob’s wife just stood back in amazement and watched the miracle happen. As soon as Father entered the room the floodgates opened and the questions came pouring out. It was a Spirit-anointed Moment. Bob was astounded at the clear and coherent insights Father gave him about the meaning of life and death, the gifts of grace and of free will, the role of worship and the Sacraments in daily life, and more - all illustrated from Scripture, the teachings of the Church, and the pointed messages of the Blessed Virgin Mary to her wayward children in our own time.

“Why didn’t I know about this 30 years ago?”

Bob lay back on his pillow. A tear slid down his cheek. A tear of joy.

Father found out that Bob had been baptized as an infant in a Protestant church in town. So the next day Father heard his Confession and then called everyone back into the room to witness his Confirmation. After that, his sister-in-law invited them all to join together in praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet. “That way we can all do together out loud what my husband and I have been doing silently every day in the corner over there.” That was Bob’s last lucid day on earth.

The church was packed for his funeral. People were shocked that it was in a church at all, and even more shocked that it was in a Catholic Church.