

UNEXPECTED OUTCOME

by Scott DeBoer

S

unday started off like any other morning with young children—finding shoes, mediating arguments and, today, getting ready for church. During

Mass, the priest stopped abruptly, motioned like a coach and called, “Time out!” He ran into the aisle and anointed a young girl who had collapsed, and then called for additional assistance. As a flight nurse, I ran to help. We took the girl to the back of the church while the Mass resumed. It turned out she had

skipped breakfast and fainted, but she recovered quickly. However, our day was far from over.

After church our family began a trip to see one of our grandparents. En route, we saw a huge cloud of black smoke rising through the air just ahead. Our son, Joshua, who had been learning about fire safety in school, heard the fire engines. My wife, Lisa, said, “We should go. It will be good for him to see the firefighters in action.” Expecting to find a car or dumpster fire, we found, instead, a house fully engulfed in flames. We stopped and stayed back far enough to allow the emergency medical and fire apparatus to reach the scene, making

sure we did not get in the way. The local fire department had just arrived on the scene.

We didn’t dare get out of the car. We watched and explained to our son how the firefighters use the hoses, axes and other equipment. It was a good moment to pray for the firefighters and those who had just lost their house, and to talk about the dangers of playing with fire. Lisa said, “The house can be rebuilt, but at least no one was hurt,” as we watched the firefighters risk their lives to salvage someone’s home. Fire and smoke poured from the side of the house and the windows. The aluminum siding seemed to be melting off the frame.

The fire started to slow down and then, at that moment, I said, "Oh my God, Joshua look at me—look at me!" I didn't want our son to see a child being carried out of the house—lifeless and covered in soot, in the arms of a fireman. Since there were no ambulances on the scene, I ran to help. By the time I got to the child, the first ambulance had arrived and immedi-

minutes passed before I let him go.

Joshua looked up at me and said, "Daddy, you're a hero!"

I smiled and assured him, "All of those people out there. . . . Do you see them?"

"The fire guys, Dad?"

"Yes. *They* are the heroes!"

While I had been providing medical assistance, spiritual interven-

She was nearly in tears. "What is going on?" I asked.

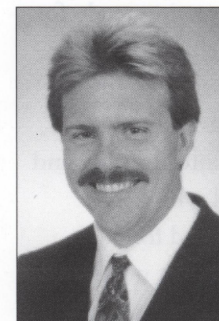
She got quiet. "You know all of those questions we were asking God?"

"Yes, of course," I answered.

"Well, after you left the house, I was still angry with God and was venting to him." Then Lisa related that less than fifteen minutes later, the phone had rung. It was God calling with the answer to a few of our questions.

Nora had been Lisa's friend for years, but they hadn't connected for a few months (one of the casualties of raising young children). Nora had a peaceful, yet sorrowful, sound to her voice. She asked Lisa to relay the following message to me: "Please thank Scott for helping to save the life of my best friend. She lived long enough for her husband and me to pray with her and to say goodbye one last time."

Many people were praying for this mother and child because of a phone call to one person, who, in turn, called many others, to pray. Every person who was asked to pray did so without question. Once the names were revealed in the paper, many were surprised to discover that the woman and the child were well-known to them. In fact, they had been befriending and praying for her for years and, most importantly, at the hour of her death. Truly, nothing happens without a reason. ■JCN



■ **Scott DeBoer, MSN, RN, CEN, CCRN, CFRN**, is a seminar leader and nurse consultant with over fifteen years' experience. He is the primary seminar leader for Peds-R-Us Medical Education, which is dedicated to teaching better ways to care for kids, and a flight nurse with Classic LifeGuard in Page, Arizona. He has taught as a clinical nursing instructor and has field experience as a staff nurse in neonatal, pediatrics and adult flight nursing. He is a member of St. John the Evangelist parish in St. John, Indiana, and lives in Dyer, Indiana.

It was God calling with the answer to a few of our questions.

ately transported the child. At the same moment, firefighters pulled his mother out of the house. Lisa stayed in the car with our children.

Lisa wondered how the medics were feeling when they saw the firefighters running toward them with a small body in their arms. How could they maintain their composure at that moment? Lisa called her best friend and prayer partner, asking her and others to pray for the woman, the child and their family.

I assisted the emergency medical crews with the seemingly hopeless resuscitation of this woman. As we loaded the patient into the ambulance, her pulse was amazingly restored. It was a moment of bliss and deep sadness. "We got her back, but did we do her any favors?" Unable to contain my sorrow for this family, I left the ambulance as they departed for the hospital.

I was slowly walking back to the car when I saw Joshua's face staring at me through the window. My feeling of sadness intensified into an unexplainable feeling of gratefulness for my own family. I embraced my son so intensely that it felt like several

tions were fervently rushing toward heaven. Several people were now actively praying for this woman and her child. It would seem as though this story should have had a happy ending, but it didn't. The next day, we called to learn the prognosis of the woman and child. The young child died in the emergency department, and his mother was not expected to survive. We later found out that the mother died a few days after the fire.

Feeling angry with God for having involved us in this situation, we started asking questions: *Why God? Why have our family go through this, only to let her die? Why did you allow us to be a part of this? Why were our children exposed to this? Why did a regular visit to our grandparents turn into such a horrific event?* Lisa and I asked these questions of each other, our anger reflected in our voices. I felt bad leaving for work so soon after hearing this horrible news. All I could do was hug Lisa and pray with her. I left the house feeling sad, knowing that Lisa would still be at home venting her anger and frustration at God.

When time allowed, I called Lisa from work to see how she was doing.