

Miracle

From Brother Jesse's Tale, Monk In The Cellar

The silverware and plates we use here at our improvised mountain monastery have a royal looking crest with a large S emblazoned on each knife and fork. Kickstart (Brother Winifred) says the S is for Superman and proves we live on the ice mountain that once belonged to the man of steel. I won't disagree it feels that cold for eight months of the year, but the S is from the Slilowicz family who ran the place as a summer resort many years ago.

We have never removed any of the items that came with the buildings. We just pushed them aside when necessary. Since monks don't have very much, that hasn't been often.

Photos of comedy stage productions held on the steps to the main dining room adorn the walls of the old dormitories and there is still a rack of post cards in the lobby we call our front room. BeepBeep (Brother Saint Wilgefortis of Wambierzyce, DSM diagnosis 293.81) reports the staff from the 1930's appreciate our lack of zeal for change. Even Mrs. Slilowicz's Mah Jong table occupies a place of honor in the staff dining room, although it's now used as a serving table. When the menu consists only of lima beans and rice, a small game table will do.

There is also a remaining influence from Alcoholics Anonymous here on the mountain from years ago, and whether that is because the Slilowicz's ran a teetotaler's summer respite or someone used the resort as a drying out place, we don't know. "Easy Does It" signs hang on the walls here and there, and copies of the Big Book of AA sit on various shelves. One little sign that catches my attention every time I pass it says, "Wait For The Miracle."

Everyone who has ever read those words must have said to themselves, "What miracle?" Or maybe, "OK, I'm waiting." Of course, I'd like to believe a miracle will save our monastery from the money grubbing bastards who run our Order and we

Brothers will be able to live here the rest of our natural days. I'd be open to a deal with God, but I have so little to offer from my side. And what if the miracle has already happened? Maybe it was when I was saved from a fiery death in the plane crash or saved from freezing to death in the snowy roll-over. Maybe it was simply being saved from a life of frantically running in circles like most human beings. Some people think monks are crazy because of the way we live. Sometimes we think most people are crazy. Many in the world demean the spiritual aspect of their being. They are asleep in the dream of their own reality.

There's another sign near "Wait For The Miracle" that tells of a spiritual awakening. I can't tell you how many writings of the Saints, the Desert Fathers and theologians I've read that speak of the nature of a spiritual experience. From personal transformations to outright physical miracles. But eventually I came to a simpler understanding. A spiritual awakening occurs when we come to believe God is on our side. I can live with an idea that simple.

I always believed in God, most of the time. Bouncer (Brother Saint Bilhilda of Thuringia) laughingly says we have a deep and abiding faith that comes and goes. But although I always believed in Him, I seldom thought He was on my side. If you had asked me, I would have said, "Sure!" After all, I am a monk. But deep down inside I had no assurance I was loved. Perhaps I was still waiting for a miracle, looking to find it somewhere.

It wasn't until I came to depend upon Him that a feeling of comfort came over me, and with it an understanding that all would work to His purposes. Whether or not I like what my life becomes, it will be for my benefit, and somehow for those around me. It is OK if I die in an accident. It is OK if I never get what I want. It is *all* OK because I have been granted the astonishing gift of playing a part in His creation. So I'm led to an inescapable conclusion. I am the miracle I was waiting for.

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