

Saved by Beauty 2

‘The joy of a saint is not to draw people to himself...but to cast his crown before God.’ Father Richard Veras

This fall I’ve faced the down-drag of affliction—my Church’s tendency to look good rather than to become good, and my mother who shattered her shoulder in August. In the face of her mortality (resilient and recovering 93-year-old that she is!), I uneasily check my own and am tempted by resignation rather than resurrection.



Jesus is faithful through His saints. During several trips to care for Mom, I attended morning Mass at a local parish. One day a week the priest presides expertly over a sanctuary teeming with elementary school kids while we adults vie for seats in back. A young father who I can only describe as radiant-in-holiness sat next to me and proceeded to boast about his first grade daughter and how he wanted to ‘live out’ the Mass for her. What? I saw him once again, warm and porous-in-love. Light broke my darkness.

A young Filipina woman reads the Old Testament passage and Psalm one day a week at the same Mass. When she does, her beauty and sanctity compel me to listen; I receive the Word freely. I asked her afterwards how she preps, and she responded that she prays to embody the Word for that moment—to step into the Word and become it. What? Something like joy welled up in me and overtook sadness.

I flew home late during my last visit in order to help Annette with the one day a week that she cares for both of our grandkids. Annette has made it clear—on that day, we both care for them. 6-month-old Camille lights up the world with her smile. Nothing like it. She sleeps, she feeds, she fusses, then boom: here comes the sun. One-year-old, Jacob is, well, perfect. My ‘strolling’ with him

and our eldest labrador Joni is the highlight of the week. He clutches her leash in his fist; indigo eyes, full of wonder, take in the world around him as if it were Eden's first day.

Through his eyes, I marvel again, and wait with renewed hope for the Day.

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