

## A Deal with God

Rose Elizabeth Kennedy (1890 -1995) was the wife of Joseph P. Kennedy Sr. and the mother of nine children, among them United States President John F. Kennedy and U.S. Senators Robert F. Kennedy and Edward (Ted) Kennedy. Jess Moody, minister and author of *Club Sandwich*, published by Broadman & Holman, offers a story with special insight into Rose Kennedy's life and beliefs.

Moody said he once taught a Bible class at the home of Barbara Holmyard, the Champion Spark Plug heiress. Princess Alexandra of Greece was invited to come, and she did. Rose Kennedy came with her. "When I saw that Rose was present, I immediately changed my subject for the day to a little homily on death, making three points," he related, including:

1. You can fight it.
2. You can take flight from it.
3. You can make a deal with God.



"After the class, Rose whispered in my ear, 'I made that deal a long time ago. I was a spoiled young bride of a strong-willed man, a socialite who attended every function possible. We were expecting a child and elated at the prospect. The day came when our child was born. She was a beautiful child. But it wasn't long until we realized that there was something wrong with her. We took her to the doctor, who confirmed our fears. She was retarded, and nothing could be done.

"Anger grew within my heart," Mrs. Kennedy said. "How could God do such a thing to this child – to me? I turned my back on God, my husband, my closest friends, and became a recluse.

"One evening, a major event was happening in the city. I wanted to go, but I was so filled with wrath that I thought I might create a scene. My husband feared it, too, so we decided to stay home. A lovely woman, who was one of our maids, gently said to me, 'Please excuse me, Mrs. Kennedy, but I've been watching you the last few weeks. I love you very much, and I hate to see this destroy your life. Mrs. Kennedy, you'll never be happy until you make your heart a manger where the Christ-child may be born.'

(more)



“I fired her on the spot! Yet, later that night, my mind ruminated relentlessly, keeping me awake. I could not forget that lovely face, the sweetness of the maid, the joy in her spirit, and especially her words. I have loved Christ all my life, and tried to be a good Catholic, but now I knelt beside my bed and prayed, ‘Dear God, make my heart a manger where the Christ-child may be born.’ I felt a fresh new divine entry into my life, and there was born in me a love for retarded children.

“Oh, by the way, I rehired the lovely maid. She was with us until her death.”

What a compelling story! We are celebrating the season of the birth of the Christ-child. Jesus grew, taught, healed the sick, raised the dead, was persecuted, died on the cross, and rose again – all to give eternal fellowship to those who believe in Him. Inviting Christ into our hearts instills “the joy in our spirits” that Rose Kennedy saw in her maid.

– Beecher Hunter