

Miracle among the Cottonwoods

A marvelous miracle is described in Willa Cather's book *Death Comes for the Archbishop*.

In the story, Father Junipero and his friend, Father Andrea, set out on a journey through a Mexican desert with bread and water for one day. On the second day, they are beginning to lose heart when, near sunset, they see in the distance three very tall cottonwood trees.

They rush toward the trees and see a little house. An old Mexican comes out of the house, greets them kindly and asks them to stay the night. Inside the little house, the man's young wife is stirring porridge by the fire. Her young son is beside her playing with a pet lamb.

The family shares their supper with the priests, then gives them sheepskins to use for sleeping on the floor. The next morning when they awake, the family is gone – presumably caring for their sheep. Food was set out on the table. The priests eat and continue on their way.

When the brothers at the monastery hear Father Junipero's story, they say they know of the place with the three tall cottonwoods, but insist there is no house there. So Father Junipero and Father Andrea – intent on validating their story – take some of the brothers and travel back to the place.

The three tall trees are there, shedding their cotton, but there is no house and no family. The two priests sink down on their knees and kiss the earth, for they know it was the Holy Family that had entertained them there.

Father Junipero recalled how he had bent to bless the child after evening prayers. The little boy had lifted his hand and with a tiny finger had made the sign of the cross on Father Junipero's forehead.

Stories like this can make believers out of skeptics. In the book, those who hear about Father Junipero's miracle develop such an affection for this story that it brings them pleasure for the rest of their days.

That's what the story of a miracle does. It strengthens faith through the pleasure of just remembering it.

Do you believe that God still performs miracles? I do.

God is not limited, and He is certainly able to work in miraculous ways today, just as He did in biblical times, if He so chooses. If He didn't, why would we bother to pray when a loved one falls ill or God's work is opposed by evil forces?

(more)

At the same time, much of what God does in the world is hidden from us. Think, for example, of the work He has given His angels to do on our behalf. Occasionally, they may make their presence known, but for the most part, they're hidden from us, and only in heaven will we understand how they protected us or delivered us from danger.

Would more people believe in God or in Christ if they saw a miracle? Not necessarily. Countless people saw Jesus perform miracles, yet they refused to believe in Him or give their lives to Him. Don't let that be true of you!

The greatest miracle of all is the miracle of a changed life – and this can happen as we open our hearts and lives to Christ.

Do others see Christ in you – His compassion, His purity, His joy?

Make sure of your commitment to Christ, then ask Him to change you from within by the Holy Spirit and make you a living witness to the miracle of His transforming power.

Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?
(Hebrews 1:14 NIV).

Our God is a miracle-working God.

– Beecher Hunter

