



A lost umbrella, an unbelieving father, three prayerful kids, and St. Anthony.

St. Anthony's New Umbrella

EVERYTIME I lost or misplaced something and I could not find it, my two boys and my little girl were summoned in to help look in every unlikely nook and cranny for it.

Even the old dull cat is asked to clear out of the way. Tables are upturned; books in the small shelf are disassembled one by one; old and yellowing manuscripts that would have served a better cause in the burning of the effigy of a lost cause, are disinterred; the long clothes-line on hangers are disentangled. All this sorry affair of things for the darn elusive thing that could not be found.

These long-suffering and patient children knew when my patience was about to disintegrate: that is, when they were blamed for the disappearance of the safety-razor, or the lighter, or a lecture notebook, or my toothbrush, or even a needle. And the "Not-I-Daddy" would then be chorused again, and their "Don't-You-Worry-We'll-Find-It" was

deeply comforting and reassuring.

Because, certainly, they could recover anything lost for Daddy's dear sake. It was always nothing short of being miraculous.

"I prayed to St. Anthony," Herman would say.

"Me, to the Blessed Virgin Mother"—this would come from the Marian loving Edwin.

"I prayed to the Child Jesus," the girl would chime in.

And so I could now give a sigh of relief, light a cigarette at long last and forget the little faithful prayers and their concerted prayers for such a darn thing as a lighter found where it should not be found. Right down in one of the pockets of a pair of pants I had on!

How it got there I could never tell. And they would all laugh and crack a joke on their Old Man.

Yes, now I could smoke and forget the little miracle while they debated on whose prayer was answered; and I would put an

end to the argument by saying that mine was. Then they would gang up together and take me for their common enemy. But as soon as each one got his nickel for the miracle prayed for, everyone was happy. At least, they understood it was an implied admission that their prayers were answered and not mine.

BUT I will always remember best the miracle of St. Anthony of Padua to strengthen more and more the children's faith on prayer.

It was a rainy day when the three of us boys went to a Sunday Mass. My new wide-spreading umbrella gave us immense comfort out in the rain. Unfortunately, we rushed out after the Mass was over to enjoy a world suddenly full of sunshine.

The new umbrella was forgotten.

We remembered that we had one when we arrived home. We hurried back for the dear

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thing that was forgotten as fast as we had no more use for it.

We collared the church-sweeper over to a dark corner. There were three of us gangling down at him, shooting questions one after another. He was frightened and cowering. No, no, he hadn't seen any new umbrella lying around in the fore-pews. To placate us he showed an unclaimed weather-beaten old thing that no longer had the semblance of an umbrella. This trick of pinning an innocent man failing, we took to task the truthfulness of the convento's house-boy, who used to take his beat like a hired cop round and about the church precincts.

No, he also saw no new umbrella lying around to be claimed after the Mass. Was it green? he wanted to know, and Edwin repeated: Black! Big and wide!

Crestfallen, we went home for a belated breakfast.

"That's God's will, Daddy," Edwin offered to give me resignation, and added: "Were you very much attached to it?"

"Oh, no! Not Daddy, of course!" Herman offered for a piece of consolation. And mulling over it for sometime when he saw how wrong he was and could be from the cloud of sorrow clouding my face for the loss of the new 15-peso umbrella, he added: "Why don't we ask St. Anthony to look for it—"

"And give it back to us!" Edwin finished.

Inside myself I felt as dubious as the veritable heathen and was about to tell them not to ask for the impossible when Edwin reminded me of the incident of the borrowed library book lost in the school's playground and how two days later he found it in his little dresser.

"That time I prayed to Our Blessed Mother," he said. "But let's remember St. Anthony this time. We've not asked him anything for a long time."

So in spite of my interior dispositions—worse than the Doubting Thomas—I joined in the silence of prayer called for by my young teachers of faith. Verily, I told St. Anthony, I would hold nothing against you if you don't answer our prayer this time.

Three days later the matter was forgotten. At least I did not wish to remind my children that this time they would have to receive their full bread of resignation.

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heart and mind. Tell him that it would be extremely difficult to marry and live with someone whom you don't love.

It is usually effective to stop a suitor by telling him immediately after he proposes that you can not love him. I hope that you are really certain and determined about your plan not to marry. Because if you are not, and should you in the future discover that this decision is merely the result of a passing fancy, you might find it difficult to attract any more young men.

L. M.

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It is not surprising that Panlilio has become much interested in such a project which will provide the small farmers with cheap fertilizer. A farm owner himself, the architect is one of the old-time directors and at present treasurer of the Columbian Farmers' Aid Association, the rural auxiliary of the Knights of Columbus. In between the demands of his profession (he is a government examiner for architecture), he engages in laudable rural amelioration work.

To demonstrate his rural interest, the architect from San Fernando, Pampanga recently did a little experiment in the backyard of his beautiful home in Quezon City. He planted a few rice plants. But instead of applying fertilizer on the soil and thus indiscriminately fertilizing both rice plants and weeds, he first soaked the seeds in fertilizer-diluted water. The result was vigorous rice plants. He has not yet succeeded in making the tenants of his farm follow the method. "I find the farmers suspicious of any new techniques," he says. But as with his other brainstorm, he hopes gradually to convince them of this one.

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Nobody dared mention anything about the new umbrella that was not even a week old with us when it was lost. Yet the three children looked expectant and so hopeful that they almost broke my heart in the disappointment that was inevitable as it did seem to me. Hopefully they would look up to the hat-rack where it had hung ready for any emergency.

And I muttered interiorly a complaint to the mother—long gone to her eternal rest—who taught them this sort of faith. I remembered then how she placed several pieces of candy before the little crucifix of Herman just after the boy had complained to his Lord for my forbidding him to indulge

in candies. He was barely two years old and he was complaining of a toothache.

"See, Daddy, what Jesus gave me?" he gloated. "I found them at the foot of the crucifix. I prayed for them."

I was stupefied with the quick answer of his Lord who could not have died on His cross for these few pieces of candy. I looked long and hard at the mother of the boy, who was smiling guiltily over the day's washing basin.

"I could not bear to see his prayer unanswered," she explained when the boy was out of hearing.

"And so you answered for God!"

"Well, He does need always an instrument to accomplish His will."

"And the pieces of candy were His will?"

"Yes, and don't forget that He's a most kind Father also! And my conscience doesn't prick me a whit, either!"

I went away, interiorly blazing. Women, I assured myself, they are simply impossible people. Impossible!

And so my children were brought up believing in daily miracles. What is worse: they were re-educating me in the dark and mysterious way of their impregnable faith.

THUS ONE EVENING, as we were all going to the supper table, Edwin cried:

"It's back! It's back, Daddy. St. Anthony's new umbrella! He's heard our prayer!"

Yes, there it was—the excursions umbrella, hanging securely from the hat-rack.

Again I was beaten!

The supper was forgotten for a while. The children gambolled and danced around in sheer joy. It was more the joy of having their prayer answered. With their faith they had moved that mountain of a St. Anthony! They were children of angelic innocence—children of simple faith.

And in my wondering, I will admit that there were tears of joy in my eyes, too—and of thanksgiving for God's having given me children from whom to learn and believe.

CANNIBALS' VICTIM

A castaway from a wrecked ship was captured by cannibals. Each day, his arm was cut by a dagger and the natives of the island would drink his blood. Finally, one day, he called the king.

"You can kill and eat me if you want," he said, "but I'm getting sick and tired of being stuck for the drinks." (Illustrated Weekly)