

THREE STORIES OF THE POWER OF THE CROSS

The Ceiling

This story happened before my own eyes. My friend asked me to become his son's godfather. I joyfully agreed. Beka was ten months old—he was happy and tranquil child, and his father would say, "It's as if he never feels the cold or any pain. I have a real warrior growing up!"

After the baptism the table was laid. Beka was put to sleep. Some time later his mother said, "When I changed his clothes I took off his cross and forgot to put it back on." I immediately rose from the table and offered, "I am his godfather—allow me to put the cross on the child!"

I went into his bedroom. The boy was sleeping deeply. I very carefully placed the cross around his neck. Beka immediately woke up and starting crying. His mother ran in when she heard it. No matter what she did—rock him, give him water—nothing could calm him down. His crying escalated into hysterics. His frightened father came in and took his son in his arms, but the boy would not be comforted.

Then he took the child out to the guests at the table. The boy immediately stopped crying and smiled.

"So that is what he wanted," the mother smiled.

"Sister, he wanted to feast with us," joked the toastmaster.

He had barely finished when there was a loud noise and the whole house shook. A cloud of dust billowed out of the bedroom. We looked in there. Right over Beka's crib the ceiling had fallen. There were huge pieces of stucco piled on his bed and around it on the floor. The grace of the cross that had just been put on him made the boy cry and thus saved him.

My husband was dying of cancer

Through my husband the Lord showed me an example of how important it is to wear a cross.

My husband was dying from cancer. I was torn apart between him and our two small children. Every night he moaned from pain. He was tormented and couldn't sleep, and this kept me up also. During the day he was just barely able to move around on crutches.

On December 19, St. Nicholas appeared to him. Note that it was precisely on that day [his feast day], in full vestments, with priestly cuffs on his wrists, and said, "John, put on your cross and don't take it off."

And he repeated this several times very sternly.

In the morning my husband told me about this dream—or vision—he didn't know which. I snatched up the idea immediately. "Put it on! Without fail," I said, "put it on!"

But he just waved his hand. "Ugh, leave me alone. How can a cross help me when even the painkillers are useless?!"

Incidentally, we didn't even have money for medications. We were in great need. He is an artist, and I was a jobless medic, what's more with little kids. I went around to various humanitarian organizations and asked for whatever they could give. We barely managed to get by.

In a word, I little by little managed to get him to put on a cross. It was evening. I don't know how I fell asleep—it was one of those sleepless nights.

In the morning I jumped out of bed sleepily. "How he must have suffered without me!" I thought and ran to the bedroom. I looked in and there he was sitting peacefully and joyfully.

"How are you?" I asked.

"I'm fine," he said. "No pain."

Just a little while later he quietly passed away.

From that time on I have worn a cross and I never take it off.

Terrible Wine

“Not long ago this is what happened to me; if someone else had told me about it I wouldn't have believed it myself,” one of our parishioners told me.

You know, I go to visit one elderly lady from time to time. She is the mother of one of my classmates. Both of her twin sons died several years ago from hunger. They were not married, and so their mother was left entirely alone. To make ends meet, she signed her three-room apartment over to her neighbours so that they would look after her and feed her. The neighbours did not exert much effort for her but did bring her groceries here and there. And of course they can't wait until her funeral.

They really don't like it when I come to visit her. They know when she is not alone. I told my spiritual father once about this situation. He said, "Be cautious, or you don't know but they might kill you, too." Now, he doesn't say such things lightly. I was naturally surprised, but I didn't take it as a warning.

Well, I came to visit this elderly lady on one Church feast day. She took out a bottle of wine. "Let's drink to the memory of my boys," she said. Well, I of course never refuse a little wine. "Let's!" I said. But there was something about that bottle I didn't like. I took it and made the sign of the cross over it according to all the rules. And what do you think? The colour of the wine changed! Right before our eyes! It turned some murky red colour.

"Where did you get this bottle?" I asked.

"The neighbours," she replied, "gave it to me a long time ago. But I never had an occasion to open it."

What sort of wine that was we never learned, but neither did we drink it. God takes care of the one who takes care of himself.

I later told my spiritual father about this incident. But he looks at such things as self evident. "It's good that you made the sign of the cross over it," he said.