

Dear

You may remember in 2012, then Pope Benedict XVI wrote an Apostolic Letter "The Door of Faith" announcing the year as the "Year of Faith". His intention was to stir up in the Church the spirit of renewal of the Second Vatican Council with the hope that the whole Church would reinvigorate and deepen our understanding and experience of our faith, live it out, confirm it, and confess it.

There is a section of this edifying document that became very alive for me in a most unexpected way. It is a line at the end talking about 'credible witnesses' that caught my attention.

"Faith commits every one of us to become a living sign of the presence of the Risen Lord in the world. What the world is in particular need of today is the credible witness of people enlightened in mind and heart by the word of the Lord, and capable of opening the hearts and minds of many to the desire for God and for true life, life without end." Porta Fidei #15

When you read that quote there were probably several people that came to mind as credible witnesses, people that you see Christ shining through their life. The story of a credible witness that I want to share with you began with a phone call to the winner of our 2021 Car Raffle. Let me introduce you to Jeanne Knotts, and her story is one of those that I believe will inspire you as much as it did me.

Jeanne grew up in a large family of 11 children that always stayed very close over the years, even as they raised their own families. Their families would gather and pray the Rosary. Jeanne's 57-year-old brother, Rodney became terminally ill in October, 2020 with heart, kidney and liver failure and the family increased their prayers and kept vigil at his bedside in the hospital. Jeanne said, when she prayed for her brother, she saw Christ on the cross and her brother suffering together.

Like myself, Jeanne has a great devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe and started a 46-day Novena to Our Lady of Guadalupe representing the 46 stars on her mantle that can be seen on the tilma of St. Juan Diego. Starting in October, the Novena would end on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, December 12.

By the grace of God, Rodney's health improved just enough to go home with Jeanne and she became his caretaker. The bedroom in Jeanne's home that Rodney had been moved into had a beautiful image of Our Lady of Guadalupe hanging on the wall. Though a devout Catholic, Rodney was not familiar with the history and devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe, so Jeanne set about sharing the miraculous story with him.

The timeless words Our Lady of Guadalupe spoke to her reluctant servant Juan Diego must have brought great comfort to Rodney in his time of suffering.

Listen and let it penetrate your heart...do not be troubled or weighed down with grief. Do not fear any illness or vexation, anxiety or pain. Am I not here who am your Mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Am I not your fountain of life? Are you not in the folds of my mantle? In the crossing of my arms? Is there anything else you need?

Jeanne, said that the last day of the Novena was December 12, and the reflections focused on the topic of Heaven, which she read to Rodney. Sadly, that day Rodney became so terribly ill that he had to return to the hospital. And it would be that evening of the 46th day of the Novena, that Rodney would pass from this life.

It was for certain in Jeanne's heart and mind that Our Lady of Guadalupe was leading Rodney to Heaven through the Novena. She felt the time she had with her brother was a special gift from Our Lady. Jeanne said, "I have been grieving him and praying for him very much and when I received the call from the Guadalupe Radio Network telling me I was the winner of the car raffle, I felt this was a gift from Our Lady reassuring me that Rodney was okay and he was in her arms. It was as if Our Lady of Guadalupe went out of her way to bring me joy—she did not want me to be sad. I can't believe what a loving and caring mother we have."

To be the 'Credible Witness' that Pope Benedict XVI wrote about, is not a lofty or unreachable goal. It's an invitation to all of us to live as shining lights of Christ in the world. It is simply to live a visible sign of an interior commitment which conveys truth to others in a powerful way. Jeanne's love, dedication and sacrifice for her brother is a great example of Christ's love.

You can see why Jeanne's story touched my heart so much. She did not have to become a caretaker, but she chose to out of love for her brother. Thank you so much for your prayers and generosity as we work together to keep the airwaves Catholic, helping us to be living signs of the presence of Christ. A Novena of Masses will be celebrated for you, and we pray that Our Lady of Guadalupe bless you abundantly on her upcoming Feast Day, December 12, and I pray that you may come to know her as our all Loving Mother.

In Jesus and Mary,

Len Oswald
President