

## *Prayer to St. Anthony for Those Suffering with Cancer*

Dear St. Anthony, you recognized Our Lord Jesus as the Divine Healer. In your goodness and kindness, please intercede for (mention name) who is suffering from cancer. If it is God's will, I ask that this day, the gift of healing be granted to (name). Comfort him/her during times of unbearable pain, and ask our Lord to grant him/her peace and patience in suffering. May God give (name) the fullness of life here on earth, or call him/her home to eternal glory forever. Amen.

## *Prayer to St. Francis*

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life. Amen.

## *Serenity Prayer*

God grant me the serenity To accept the things I cannot change;  
The courage to change the things I can; And the wisdom to know  
the difference. Amen.

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**GOD ANSWERED OUR PRAYER**  
(HIS WAY)



BY ROBERT SASS  
ON BEHALF OF PAULINE SASS FAMILY

*In Loving Memory*



*Pauline Eva Sass  
June 4, 1927 – October 4, 2001*

## Time

Our days on Earth are numbered,  
Only God knows how many we may have.  
It may only be a few days, weeks or years.

Only God knows when.

For some, the end will be quick,

For others, it will linger.

God put us on Earth for a purpose,  
To touch people and make a difference.

For some, their job on Earth is done.

For others, we still have work to do

They will live as a part of us,

For we are a part of them.

Russ Sass

October 4, 2001

Jesus. What had been such a heartbreaking time had become a joyous moment. *God had answered our prayers* and Mom was totally healed.

Today, life goes on and all of us desire to have that opportunity to reach out and give Mom that hug and kiss but we also know that she is at peace and no longer suffers. She has become an inspiration to all of us and we all know, because of her, our faith is strong. I just hope and pray that I can have that same strength and courage she showed throughout her life here on earth. Many blessings have come since Mom's "birth to eternal life." Many of us have become closer to God and to each other. We communicate even more as a family and inquire about each other's well being on a very personal level versus as a matter of conversation. We express emotions that were never heard before. Death no longer is something to be afraid of because it is not the "end" but instead a moment in time that all must pass through some day to enter "eternal life." It is, therefore, the "beginning." As we continue to say our prayers, it is at times with sadness, but it is also in knowing that we have an intercessor in heaven preparing the way for our coming. Over the past years, Mom had always given so much of herself for us and was told various times not to be a martyr and that it was time for her to put herself first. She never did follow through with that request but instead, right unto her final breath, gave all of us a happy and special moment of our lives. She may have been a martyr but a son whispered into her ear that final night what many of us had always known — that Mom was always and will forever be to us — a Saint.

## FOREWARD

When my sister asked me many months ago if I would consider writing this story for potential inclusion in a book, my initial reaction was, "Why me?" Her response was simply, "Because your good at doing this stuff." For many months this task just sat on the back shelf of my mind and on occasion I would think about how I would write it.

The answer came many months later as I sat and listened to a gentleman talk about his work as a chaplain working with terminally ill patients and helping them prepare for their death. The true realization came to me about my mother's death and simply the fact that *God had answered our prayers*.

On many occasions I wish I had stayed and experienced first hand the tremendous blessing that many of my family members received that day but then this story would be much different. This is not my story but instead my family's story. It is one of faith, hope, and love shown from (and to) our mother. Thank you Lord for blessing our family with Mom and the beautiful gift you gave this family as you welcomed her home. God Bless.

*Bob*

## God Answered Our Prayer

(His Way)

Growing up in a family of twelve children, one had to learn how to share and get along. There have been a lot of advantages (and some disadvantages) but if I had a choice of doing it all over again I wouldn't change a thing. Growing up on a farm in the Plains was not always easy. We didn't always have the best of everything but we always had what we needed; loving parents, clean clothes, a roof over our head, and plenty to eat. Many of us didn't realize during our growing up years how much our parents did for us, but in retrospect, we now know we were tremendously blessed.

My mother was not only a full-time mother but also a registered nurse and worked at a Nursing Home for 20 years. She had many interests of which one was painting. She never had any formal training but managed to take a few courses and from that she started her creations. What started as a hobby for her turned out to be a blessing for her family and friends. Every time she gave one of her painting creations to a family member she felt it wasn't much and she wished she could do more. As we tried to let her know, that gift of love gave us more joy and satisfaction than any other material thing she could have given to us. Today each of us has numerous pieces of art that she created for us and keeps her memory very much alive within each of us.

One thing we knew we could count on was our Mother's constant care and concern for us. I'm sure not a day went by that she

to stay. I think many sensed that this would be the final full day Mom would be with us. As the day turned into night, family members settled down to begin the final night vigil. Many noted how peacefully Mom slept that last night. It provided for a very calming effect on the family. Earlier in the day, my brother was talking with the priest inquiring about having a Mass said for Mom in her room. Later on, many of the staff told the family how rare of an event this was for the priest.

The next morning, October 4th (which also happened to be the birthday of one of her sons), my brother met with the priest and it was decided that Mass would be scheduled that afternoon for 3:00. There was no particular reason why that time was picked but in retrospect we now know why. The day was overcast and somewhat dreary with the morning hours being somewhat uneventful. That afternoon family members gathered in Mom's room to begin Mass. Many noticed at that time that Mom's breathing was becoming shallower. My one sister had not yet arrived so my other sister was whispering in Mom's ear that she needed to wait because she wasn't there yet. As my sister was arriving into town, suddenly the sun broke through the clouds and the rays came forth from the sky. She knew she needed to get there fast and that time was very short. She arrived just as the sign of peace was to be shared and let Mom know that she was there and that it was ok to go.

The miracle we had asked for earlier was granted that afternoon of October 4, 2001 as the Mass was being said for Mom. As the family surrounded her with their burning love, she left peacefully to be with

to say "goodbye" but instead "see you later" and that when I left I was not going to look back. As I turned to leave, our eyes met and my heart was truly broken but with my head held high, and not looking back, I left, focused on the task at hand and looking forward to that day "when we shall meet again."

In the early hours of October 2nd, my sister was sitting with my mother doing as others had done. Speaking to God, all that she asked was that she be granted the opportunity to be with Mom when the time came. The day turned out to be what many thought would be her last day. But, we found out that Mom's eldest granddaughter, who lived in Oklahoma City, was leaving to drive non-stop to be with Grandma. Her son told Mom that she was coming but that it was still okay for her to go. My mother responded, "No, I'll wait." And that is what she did. Mom spent those last few days not thinking about herself but wanting to make sure that we were all prepared. Her family spent those days praying by her side crying and begging God for that miracle of healing and giving her back to us whole. Our mother had gone through so much pain and suffering that we just wanted that one miracle.

The next day, October 3rd, turned out to be very much of a transitional day. Her granddaughter arrived and was able to spend time with Grandma. Mom's sisters were there to visit and provide comfort. It wasn't a sad day but instead one where much laughter was heard. Throughout the past nine days family members were taking turns standing vigil with Mom. On this day, however, the family felt a strong silent urge

didn't ask God for his protection and safety of her children. I'm sure we caused her plenty of concerns but also a lot of joy and happiness. Her motto of "Be Nice" still rings in my ears today. How a mother with twelve children could get us to do the things we did is beyond me.

My mother had a strong faith and belief in prayer. It was common to see her praying. Whether it was a formal prayer or not, she was always talking to God. Her most cherished prayer was the rosary. Every night before going to sleep she would say the rosary. You could always find a rosary under Mom's pillow. During difficult and stressful times, the rosary became her spiritual crutch. She even acquired a rosary that would glow in the dark so she could always find it at night if she needed. She always prayed for others and asked God to take care of them first. If anything was lost you could be assured she had a prayer heading to Saint Anthony. When the terrible storms came, you knew a rosary would be starting soon.

Overall, life was good and God had blessed us abundantly. Children were married, grandchildren came into their lives and much happiness was enjoyed. Then, in 1990, things changed.

In May of 1990, my mother had her routine mammography test performed. What was a normal routine became anything but normal. Tests indicated she had breast cancer. The initial shock was devastating but soon thereafter she decided to have a mastectomy. Once complete she decided it was time for life to go on. In December 1991, she had her

first successful hip replacement surgery but a few weeks later suffered a blood clot. It appeared we were getting on a roller coaster and we just wanted to stop and get off. Through God's blessing, she came through that low point. The next several years were good. In January 1995 she had the second successful hip replacement surgery and shortly thereafter began to travel to see children/grandchildren. We were back on the upswing when, during the winter of 1997-1998, she experienced, what many thought to be, as a case of pneumonia. However, in April 1998, a reoccurrence of the cancer appeared; this time on a lung and the diaphragm. Here we were again on the downswing but thanks to doctors and modern day treatments, the cancer was contained. She then began treatments with a cancer specialist who provided her and us the hope that we wanted. Things seemed to be back on the upswing and for a number of years it all seemed that it would be ok. Unfortunately, in July 2001, she experienced unexplained swelling. Initial treatments didn't work. In August 2001 she was hospitalized and diagnosed with renal failure. She was transported to another hospital where she started kidney dialysis. She responded well and the prognosis was good. She improved dramatically and was transferred to a local hospital for 30 days to continue recuperating. During this time however, she again began to deteriorate at an alarming rate. We took her to another hospital where she was admitted. Unfortunately, over the next 10 days her condition deteriorated to a point that doctors could not save her.

What happened the next 10 days was truly a blessing. As word spread of Mom's condition, family members from around the country

began to arrive. One thing my mother never wanted was to die alone. A 24-hour vigil began with someone being with her always. What we later experienced was indeed a gift from God.

Each of us took turns sitting by her side praying and talking. It was during this time that she did what she had always done for us her whole life. We were each given the time to spend a very intimate moment with her during which she took each of our hands and assured us, with great faith, that things would be ok. It was important also for each of us to let her know, individually, that it was ok for her to go on. One day as Dad was sitting with her, she motioned to him with a squeeze of his hand that she wanted to tell him something. As Dad came close, she looked at him and said she was so sorry for all of the health problems she had that caused so many problems for him. With a reassuring squeeze of her hand and tears in his eyes he said, "When we said over 52 years ago 'for better or for worse, in sick times and in health — I meant what I said.'" Even though this was a heartbreaking time, much comfort was given to each other.

The morning of October 1st became my most heart wrenching time of my life. As I visited with my mother, we again wanted to assure each other that things would be all right. As the time arrived for me to leave for the long flight back home to my family in Texas, I grasped her hand and laid my head on her shoulder and cried. I knew this would be the last time I would see my mother alive on earth. I whispered in her ear that she had been a "good and faithful servant" and that I was not going