

# Maria's battle nothing short of miraculous

**T**hat's a miracle! Many contend that a miracle is a marvelous event manifesting a supernatural act of God. For others, it is something contravening the laws of nature. For some, believing in the unbelievable is miraculous in itself.

Many years ago a young wife, aged immensely beyond her years, limped into the emergency room carrying two feverish toddlers shivering in her arms. Telltale skin burns and poorly healed fractures made it clear that all were victims of abuse.

Soon it was clear that the tragedy had no bounds. Mom (Maria) had developed serious diabetes and a rapidly progressing abdominal cancer. She was dying.

I was drawn to this wounded pup and our clinical bond and trust falteringly evolved. An adolescent mother, she and her children had been murderously robbed of childhood innocence; suckled on disappointment and weaned on despair.

Informed of her diagnosis and satisfied with her children's safety, Maria wanted no further care. I shamelessly admonished her that she must fight for her children, all the while knowing, as we doctors think we do, she would never leave the hospital. I promised her that one day she and her babies would feel joy

The miracle began slowly. Owing to vacation mishaps years earlier



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while I visited the magical mouse in Orlando, repentant vendors promised me future compensation. By the time the smoke cleared, airfare, a rental car, lodging and Disney World admission were waiting for Maria and her toddlers

Yet she was dying. When told of the scheme to whisk her and her babes to fantasy-

land, life beamed in her eyes. I could hear her soul snap into action attacking the beast ravaging her body. Against all I had learned, a battered and bruised mommy made it home with a CAT scan and follow on appointments scheduled for two weeks.

**A**t the appointed time, my nurse hovered in my doorway, buoyed by joy, wet-eyed and spiritually transfigured. Stammering, she said, "It is Maria, she, ah, she is so alive."

Guided by grace, this beautiful young mother glided into my office. It looked like the Maria that God would have fashioned were he to meddle in our miseries. She spoke serenely. "I stopped taking the narcotics, they made me sleepy and I have no more pain. I am eating everything and my blood sugars seem OK. Doctor? Doctor? Are you OK?" I beckoned her in for an exam. It was unbelievably stone-cold normal.

A lump was growing in my throat and my voice grew strangely hushed. The phone rang and I shared amaze-

ment with the chief of radiology telling me of her impossibly normal scan. Softly, before I hung up, she touched my hand on the phone and said, "I know." I felt as if the hand of God were gently stroking my disbelief. The sweat of my soul pooled in my eyes as my nurse handed me a tissue and floated out with our miracle. Maria left for Orlando that weekend.

**S**ome weeks after the joy of a lifetime with her children, Maria appeared in my office gaunt and wasted and desperately pleaded, "Tell me my babies will be OK. Tell me." We spoke until the ache lifted from her spirit. She reached closure with the cancer that had so quickly returned to ravage her body and rose to face me. Without a word or a touch, I was bathed in the Shekinah glory of a realized dream. I saw that she knew it was over and her children would be safe.

There was no sorrow that Friday in the hospital. Maria's babies lay in her arms, sleeping, as God called his angel home.

Take whatever messages you want from this true story. A spontaneous, temporary, complete remission of cancer; well, I don't know. For me, thank you, Maria; I believe in miracles.

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