



Christ's Other Burial Cloth

In the *Gospel of St. John*, we read the account of Sts. Peter and John running to the tomb on Easter Sunday morning: "Presently, Simon came along behind [St. John] and entered the tomb. He observed the wrappings on the ground and saw the piece of cloth which had covered the head not lying with the wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself" (*Jn 20:6-7*).

Therefore, the Gospel account explicitly mentioned first the "wrappings," which are believed to be the Shroud of Turin and the bindings. The shroud is a long linen sheet about 4.36 meters long by 1.1 meters wide (or 14'4" x 1'7"). Jesus would have been laid down on top of the shroud, and then it would have been folded over Him. Jesus' body would then have been bound by narrow linen strips.

The other cloth was the head covering, called the *sudarium*. After Jesus had died but before He was taken down from the cross, His head would have been wrapped to collect any bloody discharges from the nose or the mouth. For the

Jews, all of the bodily parts and even the blood had to be preserved for the future resurrection of the body. For this reason, Jesus' body was not washed before being placed in the tomb. After the body was removed from the cross, the *sudarium* would have been removed, Jesus would have been covered with the shroud, and then the *sudarium* would have been wrapped around His head.

Early Christian sources state that St. Peter took custody of the *sudarium*, and it was kept in the Holy Land until the Persian and Muslim invasions. Records indicate that it was taken then to Alexandria, Egypt, and then to Cartagena, and eventually to Toledo, Spain, where it was kept (636-711 A.D.). Again due to the Muslim invasion of Spain, the *sudarium* was taken to the Cathedral of Oviedo, where it remains to this day.

In 1989, Jose Delfin Guillermo Heras Moreno led a team of about 40 scientists (Investigative Team of the

Spanish Center of Sindonology, i.e. EDICES), with expertise in hematology, pathology, palynology, criminology and other fields, to investigate the *sudarium*. Here are some of the findings:

The *sudarium* is a linen cloth, measuring 85.5 by 52.6 cm (or 34 by 21 in.). It was wrapped around the head of an adult male who had a beard and mustache with his hair tied in the back. Blood stains are present, but no image appears.

The *sudarium* dates to the time of the Roman Empire.

The weave of the line uses a *Z twist*, indicating it was produced between 400 B.C. and 500 A.D.

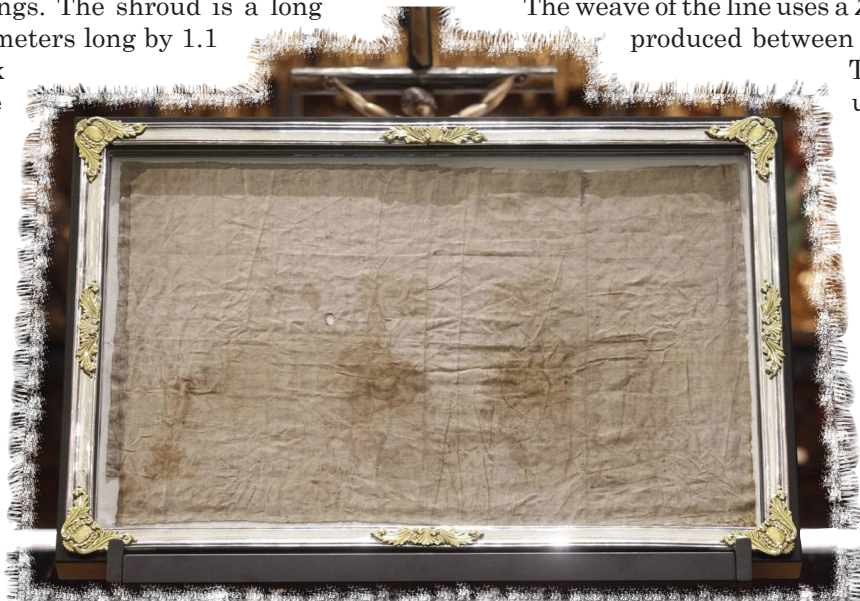
The Shroud of Turin uses the same *Z twist*.

Some 141 pollen grains and 10 fungus spores were discovered on the *sudarium*; 99 percent were endemic to the Mediterranean region. Three plant species were identified that grow only in Palestine — the terebinth, tamarisk and the batha oak. Two other native plant residues found were that of the "Rocks Rose" (*Cistus creticus*) and *Goundelia tournefortii*, which

may have been used for Jesus' crown of thorns. All of these can be found within a radius of 20 km of Jerusalem and blossom in the spring (around Passover time). These pollens also appear on the Shroud of Turin; however, there are pollens of Spain found on the *sudarium* which do not appear on the shroud (which is kept in Milan) and vice versa.

Traces of myrrh and aloe were found. Remember: Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloe for the burial of Jesus (*Jn 19:39*).

Two kinds of blood are on the cloth: First, around the nose and the mouth, there are traces of blood and other liquid from the pulmonary edema that was caused from asphyxia (the ultimate cause of death by crucifixion); this blood would have been discharged when the body was removed from the cross. Second, traces of blood around the head were found, caused by the crown of thorns. The blood



The Sudarium of Oviedo, the cloth believed to have been wrapped around Jesus' face and head after His death

GOSPA MISSIONS

Mission Statement: Gospa Missions is a nonprofit organization headquartered in Evans City, PA. It was established in A.D. 1990 for the purpose of evangelizing the world's people to the Catholic Church. Gospa Missions is dedicated to serving our Lord, spreading devotion to His Blessed Mother and general faith-building. We are obedient to our bishop, spiritual directors and the Magisterium.

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Gospa Missions' religious goods store, Amazing Grace, is also available for your conference or event.

*This newsletter is dedicated
to the Holy Spirit.
May we always
do God's will.*

An Editorial Reprint from Thomas . . . A Message from Mary

Hello, once again, dear friends of Gospa Missions and Abode for Children.

You are the reason we exist. I am excited to be sending you another one of Tom's amazing editorials in this next newsletter. As I look through several hundred of the editorials he wrote over a twenty-year period, I am truly blown away as I read them because so many of them touch on problems or difficult situations we are all facing today — in 2021.

The editorial below was originally printed in June of 2008. As you read it, you might think to yourself that this may as well have been written yesterday — that's how relevant Tom's writing is now. So this piece, written almost 23 years ago, has explained situations that Tom expected to be happening and, as we read his words, we see how very close he came to the situations we find ourselves in today, only maybe worse.

The horrendous covid pandemic that we and the whole world have been dealing with since last March has made all of our lives much more difficult, especially in the way the governments have treated our freedom of religion and our God-given rights. How many Catholics will we have lost if and when this crisis finally ends?

Please read this editorial with an open heart and work with him to make use of the gift of REPENTANCE that will secure your path to heaven. **Here's Tom:**

Is Repentance Out of Fashion?

As we traverse this soon-to-end path of life, we find it to be a constant learning process. It starts at the moment of birth. Parents can hardly wait to hear their child speak his first words and soon they start: "Mama, Dada," and so on. By the time the child is two or three, he is fairly familiar with the English language. It has taken much time and attention to achieve this goal and this effort sets the pace and direction for this child's entire life.



The next twenty years of that life will be spent setting and achieving more and greater goals as the educational process continues. As his teachers and instructors, both religious and secular, attempt to hone the child's abilities to the maximum, there are always tests to see how much has been accomplished. If a test is failed, the child must go back and study the subject again in the hope of passing the test on the next try.

As the child progresses through the educational process, we make sure that the education he receives is well-rounded, and so we add music, art and other cultural activities, as well as developing athletic abilities, social skills and more.

It all started with baby steps. Gradually, the difficulty of the lessons is increased. You might characterize this process as "raising the bar." Through these exercises, the child starts to become comfortable and well-schooled in one or more subjects that will likely turn out to be his career as he enters adulthood.

By this time in his life, the child has learned one thing very well: the more you do something, the better you become at doing it. With high achievement on the minds of most parents, **the drill is: practice, practice, practice. This story has been going on from the inception of man and I always thought it would continue as long as there was life here on earth. I am beginning to believe that I was wrong.**

That entire premise of achievement by gradually *raising the bar* is changing in the most unlikely place—the Catholic Church. **We, in our quest for wealth and worldly happiness, have decided that, where faith is concerned, less is better.**

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Less kneeling, less genuflecting, less fasting, less praying. Fewer holy days of obligation and feast days, fewer statues, fewer holy pictures, fewer rules and regulations, fewer sins. Less tradition, less evangelization, less conversion, less baptism and other sacraments, less attention to the Word of God, less attention to saints. In general, less reverence.

All of this “less,” I guess, is supposed to produce better, more modern, Catholics and so we implement these ideas with a passion. The question now is: did these “less-ons” achieve their final objective? **Are we better Catholics?**

I guess the answer depends on who is setting the goals. If your goal is fewer churches, fewer practicing Catholics and fewer priests, then your goal has been achieved and we should applaud the leadership of the Church for accomplishing this goal.

It is difficult to bring myself to believe that it was really the goal of the leadership of the Church, in the end, to be where we find ourselves today. But I do believe that we, as Catholics in general, and our leadership, specifically, have let God down in an astounding way by attempting to achieve more by actually doing less. We all can see the mess it has caused. “Lower the bar” theology will never work.

God has demanded obedience from His children in all generations and those generations that have given it to Him have thrived. In this generation, where obedience seems to be quite elusive, we reap the fruit of that rotting tree. Our society, as we know it today, is crumbling. The democratic system is falling apart because the faith of the people has done an about-face.

At a point in the history of our church, when it seems we could use an abundance of exorcists, try to find one. When we Catholics should be putting on sackcloth and sitting in ashes, we find some dioceses forbidding Perpetual Adoration. We are more engrossed in making sure we do not capitalize words like *he* and *him* when they refer to God than we are in getting on our knees before Him. We spend more time making sure the word *man* does not appear in our church services than we

spend praying. We spend more time making sure our priests never forget that they are only *presiders* than we do truly praying for good and holy priests.

We have, in fact, spent so much time in un-educating ourselves in the ways of God that we are at a point where we do not even understand what the word *extraordinary* means. We are at a point where we refuse to adhere to our own Canon Law or believe in our own dogmas. At this juncture in history, we are not involved in building up the Church but in building a house of cards. We have arrived at the crossroads where we are more interested in befriending heretics than we are in encouraging lukewarm Catholics. We appear to have forgotten that the goal was to get the plank out of our own eye, and it is *then* that God intervenes.

I believe we are on the threshold of a great chastisement. God has revealed to us His state of anger in regard to our acknowledgment of Him through apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She has delivered knowledge of His future actions if we do not return to Him now. **He has always warned the world before He punished it and that is the mercy of God.**

There are simply too many people out there, wolves in sheep’s clothing, relating to God’s children that He loves us so much and is so merciful that most everyone is going to heaven. And so we do little in our own behalf. Why bother? In spreading this lie, the wolves have seduced the world into dropping its guard and the Master of Lies has convinced us that he doesn’t exist.

The truth is we are an apathetic lot that needs to be disciplined. **We have grown lazy and, as a result, have accomplished almost none of God’s plan for us.** In our arrogance we will protest the very words written here and insist that we are good servants. But, upon close examination, we would find we do almost nothing. Surely the people of Sodom and Gomorrah thought themselves do-gooders, also.

The Jews thought that they were right on the salvation mark and so God, in His infinite mercy, sent John the Baptist to admonish them, “*Repent.*” But the leadership of that

Church cried out, “*We are doing God’s will.*” They were not! And when God, Himself, admonished them to repent, they had Him killed.

Now, in this day, God’s Word goes before Him. “*Repent!*” The messages of Our Lady beg us to repent. Messages from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Holland, Africa, Japan and throughout the world, cry, “*Repent!*” Will we be like the Jews or the Sodomites and claim our innocence or will we be like the Ninevites and turn back to God?

As pointed out in the May, 2005 issue of *Inside the Vatican*, the Catholic Church, amidst the dizzying changes happening in the world at the time of the Second Vatican Council, decided to “democratize,” “horizontalize,” “demythologize,” “historicize,” diminish the distinction between the priest and the people, eliminate potential barriers to ecumenism, expel any shadows of “superstition.” The result was not what anyone expected.”

It seems that the time has come when **the Church needs to do a U-turn—a return to prayer, fasting, reverence and to the tradition that was handed down to us. Then it will grow and flourish.** As it is now, in thirty years or so, Muslims will outrageously outnumber us and they will force their faith upon us Christians in a greater way than they do today. Your children will become Muslim or die. This may fulfill the prophecy of our Lord when He asked, “When I return, will I find any faith?”

This all may seem to disagree with Pope Benedict XVI when, at his Inaugural Mass on April 24, 2005, he said he has much hope—“...the Church is alive because Christ is alive!” But there is no disagreement here. The Church *is alive* in every Catholic who follows the narrow path. Those who attempt to turn that path into a super-highway are the ravenous wolves of which Christ spoke. Each reformer who follows in the path of Luther follows in the path of Lucifer.



Thomas Rutkoski

...and Mary





GOSPA MISSIONS UPDATE

2021 is off to an exciting start at *Gospa Missions!* Thanks to the support of our generous donors and customers, we are well on our way to achieving last year's goals *and* have been given some new opportunities by God, as well!

- We are in the process of transforming *Apostles of the Last Days* into an e-book – look for more information in the coming weeks!
- We are hosting a weekly Rosary call with reflections by Bishop Strickland of Tyler, TX. The call takes place at 9pm EST so that people around the country can join in. If you are interested in calling in on your computer, phone, or mobile device, please visit our website and click the banner at the top to sign up to join us and become one of Our Lady's Prayer Warriors.
- We are in the process of getting architectural

drawings completed for the needed renovations for Our Lady's building. This is the first step towards making important repairs and pursuing our goal of repurposing space into a chapel. We will continue to keep you updated on our progress.

- We have upgraded many of our systems to help us be more equipped to succeed in the realm of e-commerce and online evangelization.

If you feel called to help us further this work, please add us to your daily prayer intentions, and, if you are able, consider pledging a monthly gift online at www.gospa.org. If you feel God calling you to get more involved in another way, please reach out to me (Chris) on my cell phone at 719-314-5007. Above all, please pray, fast, and make sacrifices for us that, through the intercession of the Blessed Mother, we might lead more souls to Our Lord Jesus Christ!

Announcing

Our Lady's Power Hour

*with reflections by
His Excellency, Bishop Joseph Strickland*

Join us in praying for our families, our Church and our country

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS at 9pm EST

▶ To join, sign up at www.gospa.org
and click on the banner at the top of the page ◀



My Scriptural Rosary

As we pray the Rosary, we will be reading the Scripture passage before each bead from *My Scriptural Rosary*, written by our founder, Thomas Rutkoski.

This little book will provide a strong Biblical foundation and greater depth to our meditation through the Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries.

If you would like your own copy with which to follow along, you can order *My Scriptural Rosary* from our webstore at www.gospa.org.



“We must pray without ceasing, in every occurrence and employment of our lives - that prayer which is rather a habit of lifting up the heart to God as in a constant communication with Him.”—St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Why Pray?

Many people do not see the value in prayer, even those whom you would call *religious* people. Perhaps they pray, but it is rote, not personal, and they do not feel connected to God. As a society, in our increasingly *self-help* world, we have started to believe that we can fix, correct, and direct everything in our lives. And yet, we know that Jesus said, *“Apart from Me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5)*. When we fail to recognize our complete dependence on God, we may be tempted to try to handle things on our own, only turning to prayer as a last resort, when all else fails.

But, as St. Elizabeth Ann Seton said, prayer needs to be a part of *all* the things we do, a *constant* communication with Our Lord throughout our daily lives. When this happens and we surrender all aspects of our lives to God, we will see Him working miracles!

Prayers Can Work Miracles

I would venture to guess many out there have had some experience with miracles. I would like to share a few from my life.

1 It had been a rough pregnancy for my wife. She had been on bed rest for part of the pregnancy but our baby boy had arrived wonderfully plump and healthy. With only three dining room chairs and no extra money, I wanted to have a party after the Baptism for all those who had prayed for us, brought us meals, watched our oldest child, cleaned our house and gave us a baby shower and meals after the baby’s arrival. In faith, I set up the Baptism with our pastor and sent out invitations to about 75 people. My wife prayed a nine-hour novena (a prayer prayed every hour for nine hours straight) to the Infant of Prague, requesting the necessary money. It didn’t appear and the party was quickly approaching. Two days before the party, a real estate broker, who I used to work for, called to verify our address. I asked if it was for tax stuff and he replied, “No, I have a check here.”

“I’ll be down to pick it up,” I responded.

You guessed it—it was enough money for more chairs and all the fixings for the reception. We thanked God for His providence.

2 Our daughter experienced an unexplained, 70% hearing loss. We had been praying for her hearing to be restored through the intercession of St. Francis de Sales but nothing the doctor was trying seemed to improve it. At the time, we went to a once-a-month charismatic prayer meeting with some friends and acquaintances. At one of the meetings, someone said, “While praying, I felt like someone’s ear had been healed. Does this mean anything to anyone here?” I looked at my wife with raised eyebrows and said, “That might be us!” At the next appointment, the

doctor asked, “What have you been doing? The hearing loss is gone.” We said, proudly, “Praying.”

3 I had a lump on my neck and it hurt. I went to the doctor to see what it was. He wasn’t sure but thought it might be a calcium deposit and prescribed some medicine to reduce it. The medicine made me sick, so I stopped taking it. This was during the week. The following Monday, my wife was saying morning prayers with our four-year old daughter and said, “Let’s pray for Daddy’s neck.”

Our daughter said, “We don’t need to pray for that, the Blessed Mother healed him yesterday.” She proceeded to tell my wife that, during Sunday Mass, the Blessed Mother statue came to life. Mary handed Baby Jesus to St. Joseph, came down off the wall, touched my neck, retrieved Baby Jesus and then went back to statue-form. My wife called me to ask how my neck was.

I said, “Oh, I haven’t even thought about it today; it hasn’t been bothering me.” She asked me to touch the lump. I touched where it had been but it was no longer there. She told me our daughter had a story to tell me when I got home from work!

4 As many of you know, we have been going through a renewed period of growth at Gospa Missions and have been relying on God to provide for our needs. And He is providing, in sometimes miraculous ways! Our century-old building needs many repairs and renovations and the first step is to have architectural drawings completed. These plans require much time and effort and come at a significant cost. I had been praying for weeks about how we could possibly afford to move forward. Then, completely out of the blue, we received an unexpected donation that covered the entire cost, plus some extra, from a faithful couple that felt called to give to our building improvements. We all praised God for His faithfulness and provision!

God is Awesome. Sometimes people think miracles only happened back in Biblical times, but I have seen how they still happen and, just as in the Bible, your faith and your prayers can help bring them about. Sometimes answered prayers come in ways we don’t expect—it may take some time to understand or appreciate the answer. Above all, prayer is your communication with God. Even though He knows what is in your heart, He loves you with the love of a Father and wants to hear from you and help you when you need it.

As we approach the season of Lent, let us remember the three hallmarks of the Lenten Season: *Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving*. Following Jesus’ example, we go into the desert and pray and fast. Think about it: Jesus, the Son of God, prayed before He began His ministry. If He needed to pray and fast before undertaking His work, how much more do we need to pray and fast before we begin our work! Thanks be to God for Lent and the opportunity to focus on deepening our relationship with Him!

— Chris Reynolds

BACK to SCHOOL – Finally!

Dear benefactors and well-wishers of *Abode for Children*,

We wish you all a very blessed New Year, filled with hope, peace and joy.

Our school and orphanages in Guntur, India have been reopening in phases due to the severity of Covid-19 in that region. Of our graduates this year, two are seriously considering entering the seminary and they request your prayers for them. The other graduates have also moved on to Junior College (similar to 11th and 12th grades in the U.S.) and are excited about pursuing their goals.

Every day, the children in the hostels are instructed in their faith by the nuns and priests who are their caregivers. We are also planning more projects, like the water treatment facility (*see below*), to help improve the quality of life for them.

We thank you for your dedication and support for the children, which gives them hope and optimism about their future. Please continue to keep our mission in your prayers as we work together with you to transform the lives of these poor children.

Thank you and God bless you!

—Shalini Dominic-Savio



St. Thomas Graduates who are eligible to move on to Junior College: (L-R) Bhargav Yeluri, Sasi Kumar Duggipogu, Yogesh Prathipati, (Fr. Allam), Samara Simha Reddy Mettu, Sandeep Aluri, and Chandrasekhar Reddy Bogireddy (Fr. Rayappa)



Care for a drink? Our boarders at St. Thomas and Mother Theresa Hostels are excited to have clean, cool water from the new water treatment facility at the campus



Another St. Thomas Graduate, Bharath Sai Kandukuri

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
from our boarders



The girls performing a dance for Christmas



Update on Nigeria



Students looking out over the courtyard at St. Joseph School in Nigeria

Amidst the many changes that have occurred over the past year, we would like to share an update on St. Joseph Orphanage and School in Ogoja, Nigeria.

Fr. Peter, who has been with us since the inception of St. Joseph's, has asked the Diocese of Ogoja to manage the daily operations of the school and orphanage so that their

additional resources can contribute to the education of the children and standardize the training of the staff. Fr. Peter remains united with us in prayer and in his counsel, and we are grateful for his many years of work alongside us in educating and caring for these precious children.

We are waiting to hear more from His Excellency, Bishop Donatus Edet Akpan, regarding the operating of the school and orphanage and we will share any updates with the sponsors of children at St. Joseph's as we are able.

When Thomas Rutkoski first founded St. Joseph Orphanage and School, he dreamed of a day when the community in Ogoja would be able to provide for the needs of their children. We pray that we are moving one step closer to achieving his dream with this additional involvement by the Diocese of Ogoja. And to all our sponsors who continue to provide for these dear children, thank you for heeding Our Lord's call to care for orphans. Your generosity continues to make a life-changing difference for those most in need!

—*Shalini Dominic-Savio*

Continued from Page 1 — Burial Cloth

stains of the *sudarium* and the Shroud match. Also, the blood from both the *sudarium* and Shroud of Turin belonged to a male with type AB blood.

Finally, if the *sudarium* is placed on the facial image of the Shroud of Turin and the Veil of Manoppello (believed to be St. Veronica's veil), it is apparent that all of them depict the image of the same man.

The *sudarium* is kept in a reliquary at the Cathedral of Oviedo. It is displayed three times a year: on the feast of the Exultation of the Holy Cross (Sept. 14), the feast of St. Matthew (Sept. 21) and Good Friday.

While belief in the authenticity of the *sudarium* as well as the Shroud of Turin and the Veil of Manoppello are not articles of faith, these relics aid our appreciation for what Our Lord suffered for our salvation and can only increase our devotion. We are left, then, with that great adage: "For those who believe, no explanation is necessary; for those who do not, no explanation is possible."

—Fr. William Saunders

—<http://catholicstraightanswers.com/the-sudarium-of-oviedo/>



Left, the large, silver-covered reliquary containing the Sudarium and other relics. Below, an illustration of how Jesus' head was tilted on the Cross when first covered with the Sudarium.



Objects on display depicting how the Sudarium was wrapped around Christ's head on the Cross (rear of photo), how He was wrapped in the burial shroud (mid-center), and a 3-D mask of the Face on the Shroud of Turin depicted with the blood stains from the Sudarium

The ART of Bringing Death to Life

Mike Fischer, the creator of *Hugging Crosses*, knows from personal experience how deep a pit of despair can be. He also knows Who can lift a person out of it. This is his story.

“I had gone through years of pain, physical and otherwise. On May 14, 2014, I had a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). The doctors also discovered I had an oddly broken back, which they thought had probably started as a stress fracture years before. Because of the TBI and other types of pain, I spent a long time in fear, darkness, shame, etc. but still tried to pretend on the outside that I wasn’t in that bad of shape. However, I was dying inside and it was observable.

“On March 13, 2019, I was lying on my bed in the darkness. I was talking with God while experiencing a guttural groaning and *weeping*, wondering how I was supposed to have a future.

“I wasn’t mad or blaming God or anyone else for my circumstances—things were way beyond complaining.

“An image of being on the hardest rock I’ve ever experienced came into my head. It was rock bottom. It was dark, like at the bottom of a pit.

“I told God that I didn’t even know what to pray. Then the words, ‘Thy Will Be Done,’ popped into my head and became REAL. God immediately responded, ‘Now you get it! I’m proud of you, My son.’ My response was,

‘Thank You. Now what? What will happen and when?’ His reply was, ‘Soon.’ That was it! ‘Soon!’

“A chain of events started *immediately*. It took a couple months before I looked back and realized what God was doing. Through His Grace and the prayers of some very serious people whom God put in my life, I received a tremendous amount of healing.

“June 1, 2019 was the first time that I came alive again, after a very long time of not really living. I stepped into the light. It was Awesome! It was real. It was witnessed by many people in my life. Most importantly, my daughter Abigail (her name means *Father’s Joy*) saw it. She got her daddy back. Joy, happiness, hope, strength and restoration began.”

Mike began making his unique style of crosses. The card he encloses with each one explains their meaning.

Hugging Crosses are carved from trees that are dead, bringing each piece of dead wood back to life. They are unique and beautiful through every cut and imperfection. You will find the representation of the beauty of life and death, suffering, enduring, changing and growing in each cross. This artist creates from his own life experiences, his love for the healing power of Jesus, and wants any observer to know that nothing can stop the love of The Father reaching out to His children with a loving embrace.

For more information about the *Hugging Cross*, contact Mike Fischer at (717) 693-9241.



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