

## **Traveling Companion: Is this a Coincidence?**

### **Fr. Michael Tracey**

I began my priesthood in 1972, serving as an associate pastor at Our Lady of the Gulf parish, Bay St. Louis. I find it ironic that I have now returned to that same parish as its pastor, some 30 years later. I have often wondered why I ended up in the same parish. Jokingly, I often tell people that the reason the bishop must have sent me back to the same parish was that I must have really messed up the first time and now he was so kind to give me a chance to redeem myself.

As I think about all the places I have served as a priest as well as the people who have remained in my life over the past years, I wonder is there any logic to the whole scheme of things.

Are there such things as coincidences or miracles? I wonder sometimes. Maybe there are a lot more miracles than coincidence because there seems to be more proof for them everyday.

Just look around us. Is it a coincidence that the sun rose so beautifully today, that it has filled so many beautiful hearts and souls with wonder, love, peace, and joy? It seems more like a miracle to me.

Is it a coincidence that life developed so intelligently and perfectly on the world? Is it a coincidence that birds know to fly south each winter, that the seasons change and flowers bloom each spring, and that thousands upon thousands of different plants and animals live, grow and thrive here?

To me, it seems more like a hundred million miracles created by a glorious, joyous mind and loving hand.

Look at your own life as well. Is it a coincidence that you accidentally walked into the wrong room and met the person who changed your life and blessed you with love? Are they all coincidences or are they all little miracles?

Is it a coincidence that you followed a silent urge to turn off the road before you had to and later learned you avoided a deadly accident because of it? Is it a coincidence that you were on the verge of despair and then heard a song, or read a line, or got a call that lifted your spirits and strengthened your soul once again?

Are they all coincidences or are they all little miracles created by God and his angels to guide you, protect you and help you to even greater love, joy, and goodness in your life?

The more I think of my own life; the more I think about the places I have been; the more I have welcomed the people into my life who became real friends; the more I realize that this tapestry, woven from people, places, happenings, are part of the design the great Weaver, continues to blanket my life; the more I realize that what often seems like "accidents" or "coincidences" are really minor miracles, dropped like petals from the hand of God.

Embrace the miracles in your life, then embrace the miracle of life. Rejoice in these miracles and use them to choose and share evermore love and joy with others. It's not a coincidence that God put you in their life. You're there to share His miracle of life. God has his reasons, even if they are just for a season.

Celebrate in the knowledge that you are loved, cared for and watched over by God and always remember that life is full of miracles and not coincidences.

I think I am going to have a longer chat with my Guardian Angel whose feast is this month of October and tell them, I like their surprises, courtesy of the Miracle Maker.