

After a retreat last year, Mary Wax asked me to do a testimonial. I laughed and said, “My life is very ordinary - nothing happened to me that would be worth talking about.”

Later I got to thinking about some of the different things that have occurred in my life. The first thing I remembered was when I was about 4 years old, I walked onto a frozen lake that had thin ice and, yes, you guessed it – I went through the ice and under water, but came up in the same hole, not under the ice. Why did I come up through the same hole? Lucky?

Not long after that, my dad was redoing the foundation of our home and had a large stack of concrete blocks. He said “DO NOT CLIMB ON THESE BLOCKS”. Well that was too much to resist, and about half way up I reached for the top block and pulled it down on top of me. It only hit me in the head leaving a 1½ inch cut. Why didn’t it crush my skull? Lucky again?

Then there was the time when I was about 12 riding my motor scooter, with no helmet, down a small city street, eating an ice cream cone when out of nowhere a dog ran right in front of me. After I hit the dog I went flying, landing about 20 feet in front of the scooter on my stomach and elbows, right next to the curb. Both elbows had gravel in them, no head injuries, but my toes turned black and blue from hitting the handlebars. Why didn’t I get slammed dunked face first onto the street? Lucky again?

Things went well for quite a few years. I lived in St. Joseph, Michigan which is on the eastern shores of Lake Michigan, when I had a chance to learn how to sail on a racing boat. We raced all summer when it was time to do the big Tri-State (which is a race from Chicago to St. Joseph to Michigan City and back to Chicago). We were going to leave early Thursday morning. Wednesday night a weather front went through, leaving 10-foot waves with high winds coming down out of the north. Large waves were washing over the North Pier, bouncing off the South Pier, causing the waves to come from different directions at the same time. As we were approaching the mouth of the channel we went to raise the jib but it got fouled up due to the waves. Since I was the foredeck guy, I crawled to the bow of the boat to untangle the sail. Just then a really big wave hit the boat; the bow violently pitched up, and then went down and to the left leaving me 6 to 8 feet higher than the deck. When I looked down there was no boat, just water. The next thing I knew I was slammed to the deck on my backside about 6-8 feet from the bow. Why did the boat come back underneath me? Lucky again?

Then there was the time I was driving to work one spring morning from St. Joseph, Michigan to South Bend, Indiana just after one of those early spring rain/snow storms. One lane was covered with about 3 inches of a water/snow mixture while the other lane had wide ruts made by the cars. I thought the ruts were just wet, and then I realized the car was starting to go sideways at 60 miles per hour. Everything went into slow motion. The car spun over 360 degrees, heading for the right shoulder. At this point I asked Jesus to protect me. Off the road I went between two steel pylons, down into the ditch up the other side over the top. The car then slid sideways and stopped 3 feet from a small cluster of trees. I was OK and so was the car. Lucky again?

It was in the fall after the road incident that my first wife passed after a long illness. I felt alone, even with my daughter and her family around me. I attended church most of the time, but was not real comfortable in my church.

As time went on, I began to date and met my beautiful wife, Dorothy. I started attending her church, Little Flower Catholic Church. She was a cradle Catholic. I was going to mass every Sunday with her; sometimes during the week. I was not feeling alone anymore. On a cold, cloudy and blustery fall day I got down on my knees by my boat to ask her hand in marriage. The wind stopped blowing, the sun appeared on us for a brief moment and we cried. We knew this was a sign from above. We married March 1, 2003 – one year to the date after we met – and started our life journey together.

Time passed and I was starting to think about becoming a Catholic but was not sure. Retirement was just around the corner, and Dorothy and I decided to build a new home in South Bend, Indiana. We had put money down on a lot and contacted a builder, but the final change on the building plans had been out to the architect for over three weeks.

Dorothy's son had suggested many times that we relocate to the Boise area where he lives, but because our daughters and their families lived in St. Joseph-South Bend area, we just couldn't leave, we thought.

I was sitting one day, checking the house plans for the up-tenth time, when I heard a voice telling me to move to Boise. This was a shock to me. I told Dorothy what had happened. We decided to talk to our daughters. Both daughters were thinking about leaving the area also.

We stopped all building plans. No fees were requested by either our builder or architect, and the \$1000.00 down payment for the land was returned to us. We put our house on the market in May of 2008. The realtor said houses weren't moving and it would be a year or more before we could expect it to sell. Ten weeks later it sold and we were out of the house. We got the price we wanted, 5% over appraised value, and the new owner bought all of the contents, in a depressed market. So we moved and finely found a house. Lucky again?

One day we stopped at Holy Apostles so Dorothy could arrange a mass for a deceased friend. I was sitting in the car when I noticed the sign, "Interested in the Catholic Church? Call..." So I did. I got the answering machine and left my number. Dorothy and I were on the way home and my phone rang. Dorothy answered and it was Mary Wax saying that she was returning a call from someone who was interested in becoming a Catholic. Dorothy said, "No one at this number was interested," and ended the conversation. When she told me about the phone call, I admitted to her my intentions and we both laughed, then she cried, her prayers were answered.

So I began RCIA, with Dorothy as my sponsor. We attended an Evangelization Retreat. It was at this retreat I realized we were moved out here so I could find a deeper meaning in my relationship with Jesus. He had always been with me in all those "Lucky encounters". I now know one thing for sure, Jesus was always with me and He will always be with me while I make my journey through life.

I am glad I heard His whisper, and glad I listened to Him. My faith has grown and deepened ever since we have been here. To that I say AMEN.

George Bock
Catholic since April 2010