

Amazing Grace Abounds In Recovery

[Through the Red Door](#) is a weekly blog created by the Recovery Ministries of The Episcopal Church for recovering people to share the experiences they found walking through the red doors of Churches where they could experience safety, refuge and peace. In the early days of the Church, when the front door of the parish was painted red, it was said to signify sanctuary – that the ground beyond these doors was holy, and anyone who entered through them was safe from harm.

Miracles

From: [Through the Red Door](#)

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A few weeks ago I was chatting with a new clergy friend. We were sitting outside on a beautiful New Hampshire afternoon enjoying one another's company and exchanging views on life and the church. I thought we had pretty similar attitudes until he said, "I'm trying to convince my congregation that the miracle stories in the Gospels are just myths." Startled, I blurted out, "But I see miracles every day!"

My dictionary defines 'miracle' as "an extraordinary event manifesting divine intervention in human affairs." As a recovering alcoholic, every facet of my current life is a miracle. Six years ago a loving Power managed to get through all the blockades I'd erected over the years to keep out any recognition that I was not in any way in control of my drinking. Very quickly the mental obsession to drink, which had been my faithful companion (and a substitute Higher Power) for decades, disappeared.

I'm a miracle who loves to hang out with other miracles. The more I learn about the people around the table in my AA home group, the more I see that their lives too are "extraordinary events manifesting divine intervention." The young woman who'd been homeless, her children taken away; the middle-aged man once ostracized by his family and neighbors. The young woman's daughter came to the meeting a few weeks ago and spent most of it with her head laid fondly on her mother's shoulder; my other friend occasionally has to rush home to care for his grandchildren.

Being in recovery is the big, capital 'M' miracle. But little 'm' ones occur in my life every day as I continue to work the 12 Steps. Just now, having spent the past month with my husband's huge extended family vacationing nearby, I am endlessly grateful for the power of 10th Step inventory. I am at all times prone to resentment, but in July of each year I become a boiling kettle. I seethe, I sulk. But this year I resolved to write inventory on the resentments as soon as possible after they bubbled up. When I followed through on my resolve and even before I read the inventory to my sponsor, I could feel my emotional temperature return to normal. I could see my part in the situation and the all too familiar character defects driving my anger. I'd realize how much of the resentment was based on fantasy. And for the time being anyway, I was able to return to being a loving in-law to my husband's big, happy, chaotic family.

This may seem trivial compared to ongoing sobriety, but to me the defusing of emotional overload through inventory brings one of those little 'm' miracles. By stopping and taking the time to do a 10th Step I'm not fixing myself. That wouldn't be a miracle, it would be self-help. What's really happening is that I'm opening myself to "divine intervention," or as I'd prefer to call it, grace. While I'm scribbling my inventory I'm silently, maybe unconsciously, praying, "Here we go again, God. I know you've heard this all before, but I'm in trouble. I cannot, cannot, do this by myself. Help me!"

And amazing grace saves me once again, just (as I said to my new friend) as grace poured out of Jesus into the eyes, ears, bodies, and spirits, of those he heal.