

Fr. Richard Woldum of Los Angeles, CA was ordained in 1979. Shortly after ordination, he was assigned as hospital chaplain for one year to St. Joseph's hospital in Alton, IL. This is his account.

"One morning, I received a call to come to the emergency room to see an 11 year old boy named Johnny who was dying. I found him on a breathing machine, his head was swollen very large.

Johnny's parents told me that he was riding his bike on a gravel road near his home when a truck came flying over the hill and hit him head-on. The collision caused him to be thrown into the nearby field. When the ambulance arrived the medics found his head cut wide open with half his brains scattered in the field. They literally picked up the pieces of his brain, shoved them into his head, and took him to the hospital.

When I asked Johnny's parents if he had been baptized, they said 'No.' They informed me that they attended no church but prayed at home as a family. I asked them if they would like me to baptize Johnny. They glanced at each other as if to say,

'It couldn't cause any harm,' then said to me, 'Go ahead.' They also said if I wanted to I could baptize him into the Catholic faith. That night, with the parents and two nurses as witnesses, I baptized Johnny.

The next morning I was doing communion rounds when my beeper went off. Johnny's doctor wanted me in the intensive care unit. 'What you do last night?' he asked in broken English, as I met him outside Johnny's room. I explained to the doctor, a Buddhist, that I had baptized Johnny (with the permission of his parents) so that he could go to heaven. When I asked him why he was so concerned, he informed me that the boy's swelling had disappeared. The doctor was still convinced that the boy would die or, if he lived, remain a vegetable, never moving, talking or even moving his eyes.

That night Johnny's parents thanked me for baptizing him. I then explained about the anointing of the sick, and asked if they would like Johnny to receive the sacrament. With their agreement and in their presence, I anointed Johnny.

The next morning during communion rounds the doctor again paged me on my beeper. He met me at the door of intensive care and directed me to Johnny's room, explaining on the way that he had heard from the nurses that I had again

prayed over Johnny.

Then he pointed to Johnny's eyes and asked, 'What you do?' I saw that Johnny's eyes were moving. 'It is just the power of Jesus through prayers for the sick,' I responded. He gave me a faintly sarcastic grin and said, 'It no matter. Boy no talk or move. He remain a vegetable.'

It was now the third night, counting the night of the accident. I suggested to the parents that they permit me to give Johnny the sacrament of confirmation. They agreed.

The following morning his legs and arms were moving. The doctor said to me in front of the parents, 'I no longer in control.' He was simply unable to explain what was happening. The parents turned to me and said they wanted to become Catholics. I recommended that they wait and see what happened to Johnny before making the final decision.

That evening when I explained to them about the Eucharist, they said they wanted this for Johnny too. I gave him some Precious Blood with an eye dropper. The next morning he was making sounds.

Fr. Woldum was away for the weekend and when he returned he continues his account:

When I checked in on Johnny upon my return, I learned he had been transferred to the third floor, which was the surgery unit. I went upstairs to see him, fearing that

he had gone back to surgery. He was sitting on his bed talking to his mother.

After his recovery, they took another x-ray of his head and found that the part of his brain that had spilled out into the field had grown back.

When I eventually talked to Johnny's parents about becoming Catholic, they informed me that they would continue praying at home. The doctor in this case started looking into Christianity. Three nurses converted to Catholicism.

In the year 1263, a priest was travelling from Prague to Rome making a pilgrimage asking God for help to strengthen his faith since he was having doubts about his vocation. Along the way he stopped in Bolsena about 70 miles north of Rome. While celebrating Mass there, as he raised the host during the consecration, the bread turned into flesh and began to bleed. The drops of blood fell on to the corporal. The following year, 1264, Pope Urban IV instituted the feast of the Body and Blood of Jesus, today's feast, Corpus Christi. The Holy Father asked Thomas Aquinas, living at that time, to write hymns for the feast. He wrote two: Tantum Ergo and O Salutaris.