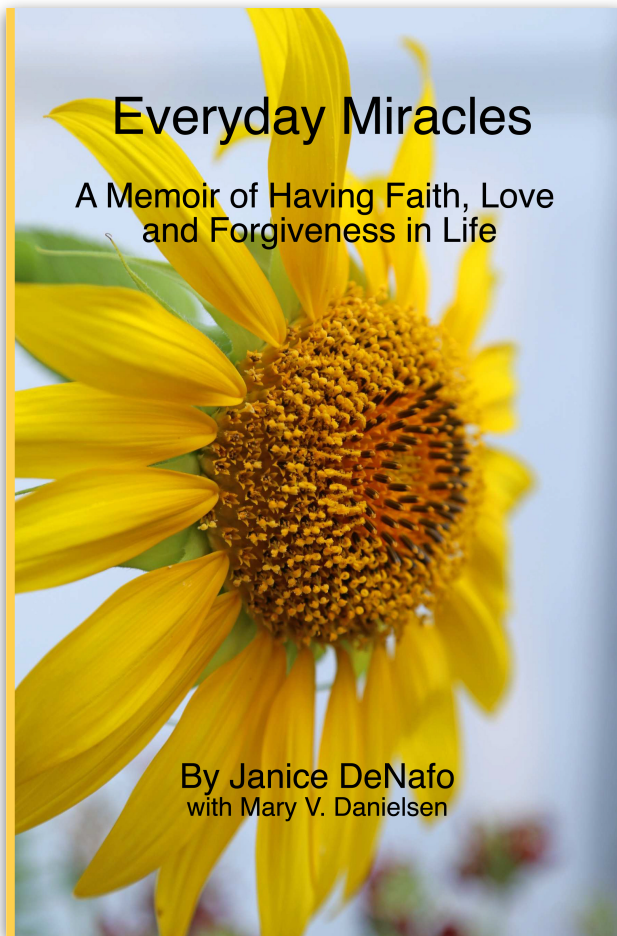

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Project Summary

Everyday Miracles: A Memoir of Having Faith, Love and Forgiveness in Life

(Manuscript - 43,000 words)

Prepared by: Mary V. Danielsen, Personal Historian

Documented Legacy LLC

Private Printing - 2015



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Throughout the last 25 years, Jan has written a dozen short stories about how faith plays a role in her life, particularly in a crisis. Additionally, she has penned numerous notes and personal journal entries. She has experienced the kind of help that can't be explained by science or coincidence. This she attributes to faith. Jan wanted these life lessons and experiences to be her lasting legacy to her children, grandchildren, and future generations. She wanted them to be of value to others. Initially Jan wrote a dozen stories and was struggling to get the remaining stories completed. She was undecided of how to proceed or what other materials should be included in the memoir. At least another dozen stories needed to be written. Jan struggled for some time on completing and organizing the stories before looking for assistance. This book is being written primarily for a private printing with hopes of publishing it.

Objective

To assist client in completing a memoir that began more than 20 years ago and to help manage the buying and production process of the book into print.

Goals

To help Jan elaborate on the written stories, identify vivid side bar stories and life lessons; write the remaining stories from life story interviews; organize and outline these stories; and compose them into a memoir manuscript.

Project Outline

- Scan, transcribe and edit all handwritten stories; Compile questions.
- Conduct 2 life story interviews; elaborate on written stories. Transcribe & edit, as needed.
- Conduct 2 life story interviews; discuss remaining unwritten and untold stories; Transcribe & edit.
- Draft outline for book project. Note: outline was revised twice.
- Revise each written story; write side bar stories
- Consult with client on new stories developed; Write Forward, Prologue, & Legacy Letter
- From life story interviews, write each additional story, including side bars & new stories developed in the course of the writing-and-approval process.
- Conduct necessary revisions, as details emerge
- Help client identify family photographs to be used in the book
- Scanned 40 family photos into high resolution digital format, light restoration
- Shoot photos of memorabilia of late husband and with client at family cemetery and church.
- Finished manuscript & electronic files prepared for print production; Backups to client.

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SAMPLE CHAPTER

(Approved for release as a marketing sample by client)

God is Love

It was early spring. The hope and promise of a new life had come to a screeching halt the day when our small community learned that Rosemary, our good friend and a mother of four, had lost her battle with leukemia. Rosemary was diagnosed with this dreaded disease five years earlier, just after she gave birth to her son, Shawn.

She spent the next five years traveling to and from hospitals for surgery, a bone marrow transplant, and treatments. The community and small parochial school that her three children attended were all hopeful that, through prayer and modern medicine, Rosemary would win this battle and have the opportunity to once again resume her life as a wife and mother.

Driving to the funeral mass that morning, I sensed Rosemary's presence. I felt her telling me to tell her family that she was still with them and to tell her husband Dan that she wanted him to find love again, because she had experienced a peace and love unlike anything here on earth.

When I arrived at the old church it was filled to capacity. You could feel the heaviness and confusion in the air. Children and adults were all asking the same question: How could God allow this to happen? What about our prayers? Where was God?

As I took a seat I asked God to please give me the words to comfort these people. I sat quietly and felt God respond.

"I am a God of love, and the people, who filled this church and stand outside on the steps are bringing my love and comfort to this family. I did not plan Rosemary's illness. I have brought her home to a wonderful life that she will someday share with her loved ones. I am a God of love, not sorrow."

As I heard these words, my spirit knew that all of this was true. I then proceeded to tell God that if he wanted me to share this with all those gathered in the church, let there be a moment when the priest will stop the Mass, allowing me the opportunity to come forth and

speak. Not two minutes past! The priest stopped the Mass, walked down from the altar, and repeatedly asked if there was someone there to read a poem. The church was silent. No one stirred, including me.

In a Catholic Mass everything is orchestrated and timed. Typically with older congregations there isn't a time available when the audience can go off the script. Could you imagine me standing up and saying, "Father, I'd like to witness right now. I have a few things to say to these people packed into your church." Yet, the priest was open and feeling the message.

He continued for what seemed like a long awkward pause, asking for the person to come up and read their poem. Suddenly, I realized that God was answering my request. I froze! I started to say to myself, "How can I get up there and tell these people how they are to perceive God at this time of suffering? Surely someone will ask, 'Who is she and how does she know what we are feeling?'"

I sat there frozen in fear. The priest stood alone in the aisle for a long extended moment waiting for a response that never came before turning around and walking his way back to the altar. The words God gave me would not be shared on that day. I let God down. As well, I felt so very disappointed in myself.

My inner meltdown reminded me of when Peter denied Jesus for fear of what people would think of him. I felt like Peter. God gave me an opportunity to speak - one I asked for - through a priest before his people and, yet, I turned my back on a moment to carry God's Word.

I knew Rosemary, but I wasn't a good close friend. There were people in the church that day who didn't even know I was associated with her. There were people who knew her better and longer. In that moment of doubt I challenged myself into inertia. I couldn't see or feel that perhaps what those friends and family needed to hear that day was perhaps exactly what I had planned to say. Maybe they needed to hear kind and healing words that they could relate to.

As time passed, I used every opportunity to share this message, particularly in prayer groups, but knew it would never have the impact that it was meant to have at the funeral that day. Little did I know that there would be another time in my life that I would share this message to a large group, that again was questioning God and his plan for our lives and the lives of the people we love.

Four years later on June 18 my life and the lives of my children would change forever. My husband and dearest friend Ron was killed on his way home in an automobile accident. It is a day that will be relived by all of us through the course of time. Ron was a wonderful and devoted husband, and father, son, and friend. He was a school superintendent, head of the church council, Knights of Columbus member, Eucharistic minister, and an eighth grade CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine) teacher. He was loved and admired in all areas of his life, especially at home.

We'll talk more about the accident and the period that followed in later chapters. For now, I'd like to jump ahead and explain my connection to Rosemary and how it related to my husband's passing.

Ron's viewing was attended by more than 2000 people. Much of it still remains a blur. In spite of the thunderous rain, and lightning, people stood in patient lines woven along a dark unpaved street, ankle deep in mud, waiting to say their goodbyes to this wonderful man and comfort the family that was mourning such a great loss. When it began to rain they ran for their cars. When it stopped they got out again. They never left. I didn't expect so many people to show up for a viewing in bad weather and then return the next morning for the Mass. They did.

The next morning was a numbing experience. The rain had come and gone and now it was a typical hot, humid late June day. Everyone got ready in their Sunday best. Somehow suits were put together, dresses ironed, breakfast served, hair combed, and tissues were tucked into pockets.

When we left Woosters Funeral Home after the final viewing and got into the limousine for a 10-minute ride to the church, passing our home along the way, my mind and vision did a cinematic fade out. All I saw was a vision of people standing outside, winding down that dark unlighted tar road. Their faces weren't clear or crisp, but I could see a soft golden light in their middle of their chests, like little gold lanterns. For a moment I saw something else. I knew they were God's love, representing all the love that He was bringing into each of us from all those people. It was like everything around me visually and audibly faded to a blurry muffle, except these very clear messages that I could hear and see.

On the drive, I thought of Rosemary and how I had frozen in fear on the day of her funeral. I thought about all the love and compassionate wishes I had just received and how everyone joining me was grieving in some way. As numb as I was I knew I needed to make a decision.

My family and I made our way into the church and sat down in the front pew. When a friend who was coordinating the music came over to me, I asked her to tell the priest that I would like to say something during the Mass.

I needed to talk to the people who were there, because I knew they were angry. After four days of shock, the rattle of constant conversation that swirls endlessly around a tragedy escalated like a flash mob. People were emotionally unraveling. How could God take this wonderful man with a great family, who loved and needed him? How could God take away such a valuable friend and professional, who was making a difference in people's lives? My house had been filled with people inside and out. I needed to address all those emotions so people could heal. I didn't want people to be angry with God. The boy really wasn't an issue at this time, just God allowing this to happen. As well, I didn't want the beauty of Ron's legacy to be wrapped up in the negativity of his final moments on earth.

This was the moment I needed to come forward to bring God's word to life.

God found a way to bring his words to life. The words he'd spoken to me that day at Rosemary's funeral were now the words I'd have the courage to share. That was the day I walked to the front of the church and gave the message I was meant to give four years earlier.

Six Catholic priests came to concelebrate Ron's Mass. When it was time to speak, I got up and my son Mark, who was sitting next to me, joined me at the podium so I wouldn't be alone. His hands now took a new role, as he kept one hand on my shoulder.

I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit. The words flowed. I did no preparation, practiced nothing, and held no notes, but, yet, stood confidently knowing the Holy Spirit would guide my words. What I needed to teach people were words from God that they all needed to hear. I told the story of Rosemary's Mass, how I let God down, because I couldn't say what those people were really feeling.

"I can say to you today that God is a God of love. God didn't take Ronnie away. God does not plan the tragedies, the sorrows and the sufferings in our lives. God gives us His

strength, just as He is giving each one of us the strength to stand here today. That is what I call grace.”

I didn't have to fear that people would question me. As I stood in front of my friends and relatives I could say I did know what it feels like to lose someone very precious, but, more importantly, I knew that the God so many are questioning today is the God, who will comfort us and love us all the days ahead. He is not a God of sorrow and suffering. He is the source of strength that is needed to overcome the sadness and loss we were all feeling that day.

Afterward Mark and I sat down and I faded back into that cinematic blur the rest of the day. As the pall bearers slowly rolled Ron's casket out of the church, the choir began to play "On Eagle's Wings" by Jan Michael Joncas, a priest and composer of contemporary Catholic music. I walked down the aisle, alongside the casket, realizing this would be the last time Ron and I left the church together. Our other home.

*You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord,
Who abide in His shadow of life,
Say to the Lord, "My Refuge,
My rock in whom I trust."*

*And He will raise you up on eagle's wings
Bear you on the breath of dawn
Make you to shine like the sun,
And hold you in the palm of His Hand.*

The day of Ron's funeral was a day filled with sadness and loss, but it was also a day when God's love was able to pierce through all of the sorrow in all of the hearts gathered to hear his important message: God is a God of love.