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Miracles

While many parents look at their children as miracles, Leo and Carol Finucane have extra reasons to do so. Their son Connor, now 4, emerged in July 1995 from a week-long coma - suffered after falling into an acquaintance's indoor swimming pool - and appears to have escaped long-term effects. Leo Finucane remembers his son's first word: "Johnny!" when he saw Johnny, his favorite doll, perched near his hospital bed.

At the time of Connor's recovery, the Finucanes, of Pittsford's Church of the Transfiguration, didn't need another miracle to boost their faith, however.

Their oldest child, Sara, who turns 12 on May 1, had been diagnosed with cancer at 10 months, and survived treatment to become a healthy child. Their middle child, Adair, 9, at age 2 had stopped gaining weight and was ill for 1½ years until doctors diagnosed celiac disease, an allergy to wheat.

When Connor came to, Leo recalled April 26 at a workshop at St. Louis Church in Pittsford. "We felt the miracle of that - the real honest 'How can things turn out so good.' This kid's back in the game."

Finucane spoke about the family's experience at one of 12 workshops at St. Louis Parish's 10th annual Spirituality Faire. This year's faire focused on the theme, "Miracles: Finding Awe and Wonder in Our Lives."

Leo Finucane said the couple has learned a couple of lessons: "One, we have to give miracles a chance. They will happen to us anyway. But they're so much sweeter if you believe in them before they come."

And two, he said, "You have to let go. Miracles do not happen when you are in control."

Who believes

Eighty percent of Americans believe in miracles, according to a Gallup Organization poll from late 1994.

But miracles mean different things to different people. In the Rochester Diocese, each time the *Catholic Courier* asked clergy and lay people at random if they knew of any miracles, the usual response was, "It depends on what you mean" or "It depends on what kind of miracle."

Church teaching on miracles is chiefly found in First Vatican Council (1869-70) pronouncements. But the council also did not attempt to define miracles. It stated: "In order that the 'service' of our faith be 'in accord with reason' God willed that to the internal helps of the Holy Spirit there be joined external proofs of His revelation, i.e., divine deeds, and principally miracles and prophecies."

It condemned the opinion that "miracles are impossible," and that "miracles can never be known with certitude nor serve as valid proof of the divine origin of the Christian religion," according to the 1967 *New Catholic Encyclopedia*.

The council did, however, indicate a miracle is a sign, is a transcendent/divine act, and, perhaps of less significance, is wondrous.

The Second Vatican Council only briefly mentioned miracles in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: "The miracles of Jesus also confirm that the kingdom has already arrived on earth"

In the Rochester Diocese, several Catholics attested to their belief in miracles, including Father Matthew Swizdor, OFM Conv., of Auburn, who conducts healing missions around the country. In California, he re

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