

When's GOD Gonna Show Up?



Daily Discoveries of the Divine

Marge Fenelon

Foreword by Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan



Liguori

LIGUORI, MISSOURI

Liguori Publications • © 2016 All rights reserved.

Liguori.org • 800-325-9521

Imprimi Potest:
Thomas D. Picton, C.Ss.R.
Provincial, Denver Province
The Redemptorists

Imprimatur:
Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan
Archdiocese of Milwaukee, April 1, 2009

Published by Liguori Publications
Liguori, Missouri
To order, call 800-325-9521
www.liguori.org

Copyright © 2009 Margaret A. Fenelon

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means except for brief quotations in printed reviews without the prior written permission of Liguori Publications.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Fenelon, Marge.

When's God gonna show up? : daily discoveries of the divine / Marge Fenelon ; foreword by Timothy M. Dolan.—1st ed.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-0-7648-1832-5

1. Catholic women—Prayers and devotions. 2. Church year meditations.

I. Title.

BX2170.W7.F46 2009

242'.802--dc22

2009013072

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture citations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

Excerpts from *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents*, edited by Austin Flannery, OP, copyright © 1996 by Reverend Austin Flannery, OP. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission of Costello Publishing Company.

Excerpts from English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America © 1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana; English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modifications from the Editio Typica* © 1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Excerpts from John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Salvifici Doloris*, Feb. 11, 1984. Copyright © 1984 Libreria Editrice Vaticana; Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Mater*, March 25, 1987. Copyright © Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Excerpt from John A. Hardon, S.J., *The Question and Answer Catholic Catechism* (New York: Doubleday, Image). © 1981 by John A. Hardon.

Excerpt by Thomas Merton, from NEW SEEDS OF CONTEMPLATION, copyright ©1961 by The Abbey of Gethsemani, Inc. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corp.

Liguori Publications, a nonprofit corporation, is an apostolate of the Redemptorists. To learn more about the Redemptorists, visit Redemptorists.com.

Printed in the United States of America

13 12 11 10 09 5 4 3 2 1

First edition

Liguori Publications • © 2016 All rights reserved.
Liguori.org • 800-325-9521

Table of Contents



Foreword ix

Introduction xi

Advent 1

- Snapshots 1
- Shepherd for a Day 4
- One Big Baby 7
- What Will Become of This Child? 10

Christmas 13

- Why THIS Place? 13
- A Child's Love 16

Lent 19

- Multi-colored Madonna 19
- Speed and Spirituality 22
- The Banana Man 25
- Unexpected Evangelization 28
- In the Spirit of the Cross 31
- Slow Down and Live 33

Easter 35

- A Golden Treasure 35
- Throwing Stones 38
- Whymania 41
- Everybody, Duck! 44
- Sing "Mary Nodded" 47

Easter Joy	50
They'll Know We Are Christians	53
God's Herb Garden	56

Ordinary Time 59

When's God Gonna Show Up?	59
A Real Intellectual	62
Did You Substitute?	64
Bumpy Trails and Fading Daisies	67
Wake Up Call	69
Berry Nice Blossoms	72
Chinese Lion Dance	74
Heart in Heart	76
Important Things in Life	78
Perpetual Helper	80
My Way or God's Way	82
God's Brave Little Soldier	85
Barefoot Knight	87
Fresh Air	89
Living Among Saints	92
Light as a Feather	94
Who's in Control, Anyway?	96
Where Could That Boy BE?!	98
Queen of the Office	101
Letting Go	103
Princess Demento	106
A Stalled Car and an Angel on a Bike	108
See Why	110
I've Got Bing!	113
Who, What, Where, When and How Come?	115
Author of History	118
The Golden Catholic	121
Family Mission	124
Settling Our Differences	126

Maybe I'm Crazy After All... 129
Used Books 132
Thread of Life 135
Master Game Maker 138
Turkey Hunt 141

Feast Days 145

MARY, MOTHER OF GOD
 Goodbye to You. Goodbye to You-ou-ou... 145
DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY
 Try Praying—For Somebody Else 148
PENTECOST
 Divine Masterpieces 150
ASCENSION
 Lost and Found 153
ASSUMPTION
 Wilted Roses 156
ALL SAINTS
 Reality Check 158
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
 Panagia 161

Father Joseph Kentenich 164

Introduction



I REMEMBER Luke's first experience with eucharistic adoration. He was just four, Matthew was nine, Monica was six, and John was not yet born. In spite of our best efforts to explain the mystery before us, Luke completely missed the point, and the presence. His patience finally wore thin and, to our exasperation and embarrassment, he suddenly blurted out, "When's God gonna show up?"

How can it be that, like little Luke, we miss the times God shows up in *our* lives even when he's right there before us? We drift along, trying our best to muddle through and all the while wondering, "When's God gonna show up?"

He does show up—every day, all day. We just don't recognize him.

For me, God showed up the day I met Father Joseph Kentenich, founder of The Apostolic Movement of Schoenstatt, an international Catholic lay movement of moral and religious renewal. When I was just a year old, my mother and I visited Father Kentenich at the home of a neighbor. There he blessed me and dedicated me to the Blessed Virgin Mary. I don't remember a thing about that day, but it was a meeting that has impacted my entire life.

Ever since I learned about this holy priest, I've felt enfolded in his loving fatherliness through his example, wisdom, legacy, and intercession from heaven. I'm convinced that it's been through his inspiration and guidance that I've repeatedly seen God show up in my life.

I began writing down the stories included in this book as a way to savor the times when God showed up in my life. Many of them are

about the times when God showed up through the joys and sorrows we've experienced as a family. I've left them frozen in time so you could experience those moments as I did when they occurred.

I've organized the stories by liturgical season, cited related Scripture passages, and added questions for personal reflection or group discussion. Don't read them all at once. Choose one per week (or one every few days, if the Spirit moves you) to enjoy, digest, and share with others. I hope they make you laugh, cry, rejoice, wonder, seek, and meditate. Most importantly, I hope they draw you into a deep, loving relationship with the Blessed Mother and triune God and inspire you to perceive the times that God shows up in your life.

MARGE FENELON



ADVENT

Snapshots

“HEY, MOM!” Matt called. “Can you come up here for a minute?”

“Oh, great,” I thought. “Now what broke?” Two boys alone upstairs together, and now they were summoning me to the scene of the crime. I tried to be courageous as I mounted the stairs. John, age four, trailed along behind me so as not to miss the excitement.

I found fifteen-year-old Matt and nine-year-old Luke in my bedroom, sitting on my bed. Everything looked to be in relatively good order, except that they had cleared everything off my old memory chest. My memory chest is an old military footlocker that belonged to my husband’s uncle during his service in World War II. Now it’s filled with snapshots, certificates, medals, newspaper clippings, and other memorabilia from both Mark’s family and mine.

“Do you mind if we look at the stuff in here?” Matt asked. “We promise not to wreck anything.”

They must have sensed my hesitation, because they both looked at me with their best-honest-to-goodness faces.

“Okay,” I said hesitantly, “but be very, very careful. Lay everything in neat piles, and don’t finger any of the pictures or you’ll ruin them.”

“Mom, we pro-o-mise,” Matt assured me.

I stood for a minute or two, watching over them. I wanted to make sure they’d hold good on their promise. But before I knew it, I was sit-

ting on the bed, too, sifting through snapshots and portraits, fingering old medals, and re-reading old newspaper articles.

We dug our way through more than a hundred years of family history. Every so often, I stopped to linger over a photo or trinket. As I did so, I told the boys the stories I had learned as a girl about relatives of long ago. Often, I knew the story from first-hand experience and would revel in its memory. They soaked it all in, laughing at antics of the past, awed at honors won, sad over losses suffered. The four of us sat there for what seemed like a minute or two but had actually been a few hours. We laid the last snapshot on the pile and began to clean up. I heaved a sigh of disappointment. I wanted the trunk to be like the widow's oil jar—never empty.

I thought of all those faces from the past and yearned for them. I wanted them to come alive again for myself and for my children. The people in the snapshots looked up with expression-filled faces as if they were quite aware that we were gazing back down at them. But they weren't. They had no idea that a misty-eyed mom and her three curious boys were peeking into their little world. They knew only the present—the never-changing eternal present confined by the film.

It's fitting that we rambled through my memory trunk at Advent time, because there is an interesting parallel. Snapshots and Advent. They have much in common, because just as the people in the photos pause in their eternal present, the Christ Child pauses in his eternal present. The tiny Child of long ago is still the tiny Child of today. He waits for us to gaze into his blessed eyes, just as the people in the snapshots wait for us to gaze into theirs. Advent comes every single year, and every single year the holy Child waits for us to come and find him. He is there, constantly, vigilantly, and unceasingly.

Oh, we may change; we *do* change significantly from year to year. We grow, mature, become a bit grayer, take on new responsibilities, deepen our faith, make new friends, and strengthen our relationships with old friends. Our possessions change; our surroundings change. We are different people as we enter each new Advent.

But our Savior doesn't change. He will forever be the same magnificent, loving, glorious little Child who came to earth in order to



EASTER



A Golden Treasure

WE STOOD before his grave, not knowing what to say. On the spur of the moment, I had taken my children to visit my father's grave on the way to see a former high classmate. Matthew, Monica, and Luke, at ages fourteen, eleven, and eight respectively, remembered a little of our last visit. Three-year-old John remembered nothing at all—he had been just an infant when we last came. Now the grave was overgrown with weeds, and the wooden cross with plastic flowers had lost its luster and was leaning precariously to one side.

It was John who got it all started. His many questions led me through the whole scenario of what it was like when I used to live here, of what Grandpa was like, how he died, why his body was buried in this spot, where Grandpa is now...

As I began to tell the stories, Matthew solemnly bent down and began pulling away the weeds. Monica straightened the cross. Luke and John walked around the border of the cemetery looking for treasures to adorn Grandpa's grave; on this open hillside, there was a plethora of artificial bouquets and decorations that had blown away from other graves. I soon found myself plucking along beside them. We worked diligently, reverently, as I unfolded my life with Grandpa for them.

Before long, my father's grave was well-groomed and trimmed

with “new” bouquets. Matthew had fixed the stand for the cross so that it stood erect and gleaming in the sun. We prayed together, and then we stepped back to admire our work.

Soon I found myself driving past the apple orchard my father and I had planned, planted, and cultivated together. How many Saturdays had I spent there with Dad—sometimes in bitter winds, sometimes in sweltering heat—as we shoveled, pruned, mowed, and mulched? He’d tell me stories of his childhood and his time in the Navy and sing me songs from days gone by. There’s nothing much left of it now but a gnarled old tree or two. Someone built a house right in the middle of it and let the rest of it go to waste.

We drove past the house I lived in during my high school years. I could again hear my family’s voices around the dining room table during our last Christmas together before Dad died. He spent the entire evening telling each of us of his pride and confidence in us, the qualities he saw in us, and of his certainty that we were all capable of making it in life even if he died that very day. He died unexpectedly just three weeks later of congestive heart failure and complications from a stroke. Now the house is a run-down eyesore.

We found ourselves walking on the bridges of the old millpond where I spent hours wandering, writing, and listening to the rush of the water over the falls. It was my place to get away, to be at peace where the world couldn’t touch me. Now garbage floats in the water and the mill uses electricity.

Being city kids all their lives, my children were enamored by my life in a small rural community of about two hundred people. They were angry that it had all dissolved before they could experience it themselves.

I was troubled on my way back home that day. My father lived for forty-nine years. In that brief lifespan, he served in the U.S. Navy, attended Marquette University, held a good factory job, married, had four children, built a house with his own hands, bought a second house and a plot of farmland, and moved his family to the country to fulfill his dream of owning an apple orchard. What was left? Some run-down property and a body in a grave.

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return, echoed in my mind as I drove along. *Is that all that's become of Dad's life now...dust?*

But I'm left, Dad's memories are left, and my children are left—just as, after Christ's ascension, the apostles were left. I can only imagine the sorrow they must have felt as they said good-bye to their teacher and friend after having spent three years at his side and trembled through his passion. Perhaps they wondered if it had all been worth it when it seemed as though there was nothing left behind, not even some run down property. Not even a body in a grave.

Was there *really* nothing left? There was everything left! The apostles were given the incredible task of nurturing and spreading the newly founded Church. They were assured of the coming of the Holy Spirit. They were guaranteed Christ's presence in the holy Eucharist and the granting of their prayers when two or three gather in his name. They were shown the promise of eternity. Christ would now live in them, through them, and with them.

Dad's not the owner of some dilapidated buildings and an overgrown clump of trees. He's a soul in the presence of God—free of the inhibitions and hardships that plagued him on earth. Because I'm his daughter, he lives in me, through me, and with me as I carry on and share with others all that he's taught me. What's left is the golden treasure of his life that he's passed on to me.

What does Scripture say?

So you have pain now; but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.

JOHN 16:22

What does my heart say?

- What loss in my life has been the most difficult to overcome?
- Have I ever wondered if it was all worth it?
- Do I believe it was worth it now?