

**Youth Culture Lesson**  
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**From *YouthWorker Journal* and [YouthWorker.com](http://YouthWorker.com)**

**Miracle**

The Mystery of Missouri's 'Angelic' Priest  
By Paul Asay

**What Happened:**

On Aug. 4, Tulane University sophomore Katie Lentz was involved in a horrible automobile accident near the town of Central, Missouri. The Mercedes she was driving smashed into another vehicle, leaving her car a mass of twisted metal and Katie seriously injured inside.

Rescue workers rushed to the scene and attempted to extract Katie safely from the car, but the vehicle was so damaged that their equipment was having difficulty making headway. Before long, Katie's vital signs began to drop.

An emergency helicopter was waiting at the scene, but as the rescue effort stretched to 45 minutes, the situation grew increasingly desperate. One rescue worker was pulled aside by someone from the helicopter and told that Katie was out of time. "Her condition looked grim for her coming out of that vehicle alive," said Raymond Reed, fire chief of New London, Mo., who was on site during the accident.

Katie was calm, though. She had been going to church, and she asked if anyone would pray with her.

"I will," said a Catholic priest. He walked up, anointed Katie with oil and prayed with her. During the prayer, Katie grew visibly more calm, as did the rescue crew. It was the turning point of the rescue.

Almost as soon as the prayer was done, another crew arrived with new equipment. Emergency personnel were finally able to pry Katie out of the wreckage. She was flown to a nearby hospital and treated for her ruptured spleen, bruised lung, lacerated liver, shattered legs and nine broken ribs.

The priest? He vanished—melted away as soon as the prayer was done. No one recognized him. Further investigation uncovered the man certainly didn't work at the local diocese. Of the 70 photos taken at the scene, he didn't show up in any. Emergency personnel find it strange that he was there in the first place, given the road was shut down for two miles for 90 minutes.

For some, the priest's appearance was a stroke of good fortune: He provided a word or two of encouragement when it was sorely needed, but some are calling the event a miraculous gift from God.

“I think it’s a miracle,” said Reed, New London’s fire chief. “I would say whether it was an angel that was sent to us in the form of a priest or a priest that became our angel, I don’t know. Either way, I’m good with it.”

### **Talk About It**

In our rational age, it can be difficult to believe in miracles. Some Christians believe they no longer happen; but every now and then, we hear stories that make us wonder if something remarkable happened. We wonder whether God reached down and personally intervened in someone’s life.

Do you think that what happened in Missouri was a miracle? Do you think it could’ve been?

It’s possible that everything in the Missouri story has a rational explanation. The priest could’ve just been passing through and somehow made it past the roadblock. The photographers could’ve simply missed him. Even if everything is explainable in this situation, is it possible that it was still part of a miracle? Could the priest still have been doing God’s will?

Do you believe in miracles? Have you ever been part of a miracle? Have you heard of someone being involved in one? Have there been events in your life that you can’t explain otherwise?

Many Christians might never see a miracle, but nevertheless feel God work powerfully in their lives. Do you feel God working in yours? Where do you see Him in action around you? In your family? Your school? Your youth group?

### **What the Bible Says:**

“For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you” (Matt. 17:20).

“‘Unless you people see signs and wonders,’ Jesus told him, ‘you will never believe’” (John 4:48).

“So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders” (Acts 14:3).

“Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in Me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father” (John 14:12).

Paul Asay has covered religion for *The Washington Post*, *Christianity Today*, [Beliefnet.com](http://Beliefnet.com) and *The (Colorado Springs) Gazette*. He writes about culture for *Plugged In* and wrote the Batman book [God on the Streets of Gotham](http://God on the Streets of Gotham) (Tyndale). He lives in Colorado Springs with wife Wendy and his two children. Follow him on Twitter @AsayPaul.