

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise," Luke 23:39-43

How can such an intelligent girl like you believe in those myths?" my mother scoffed. Although she had been baptized and confirmed a Lutheran, when I was about eight years old, my mother stopped attending church.

On Sundays, she'd cajole me, "It's too cold/hot; it's snowing; it's raining. Don't go to church." I went anyway.

Although I sat alone in church each week, my Sunday School teachers, youth leaders, and congregation members (including the LWML women) encouraged me.

I understood why my mother didn't want me to walk the half-mile home from church alone in the dark, but that meant I missed the first year of confirmation instruction because of the time the class was scheduled. During the following year, my gracious pastor held special weekly, three-hour, Saturday morning classes for me, allowing me to catch up and still be confirmed on time.

Not only did she declare herself a non-believer, my mother was openly hostile to Christianity. I had to explain to our perplexed young daughter why her Nana deliberately clinked the knife and fork together continuously while we prayed the table grace: "It's her way of saying, 'I refuse to participate in this.'"

I prayed unceasingly that the Holy Spirit would lead my mother back to faith one day.

When I became an LWML district president, I looked for opportunities to include her. She loved multicultural events, so I knew she would be eager to attend a district-wide musical celebration of our Atlantic District missions, held in New York City. At a dinner following that festival, the national LWML President, one of the event's guest speakers, kindly asked my mother which church she attended.

She blurted out: "Christianity is — (a word for garbage)." Yikes, Mom!

Over time, I began to witness small breakthroughs: she loved the Alma Kern books personally inscribed for her; she began reading the *Quarterly* when I became the editor; and she started bowing her head — and remaining silent — during grace.

Fast forward: My mother needed to go into a nursing home after hospitalization. On her first Sunday at the Lutheran Care Center, where I also happen to serve on its board, a volunteer — perhaps thinking that my mother, too, would be a Lutheran — came into her room and "scooped me up and just took me and wheeled me into the chapel!" reported my mother, with astonishment.

Expecting a confrontation, I held my breath. But my mother added softly, "I liked it, and I think I'll go back."

And she did.

In the weeks that followed, she told me that she confessed Jesus Christ as her Savior. The Holy Spirit had overcome her unbelief through the hearing of God's Word. We talked about the promises of God, and I prayed with her. My husband and I started to attend the Sunday chapel services beside her. I was blessed with the indescribable joy of hearing my mother's voice sing old-time hymns and speak the words of the Apostle's Creed, the Lord's Prayer . . . for three precious weeks before she left this earthly life to rest in the arms of her Savior.

The best "finally" of all.

Nancy

Nancy Graf Peters, Editor-in-Chief



KNOWING CHRIST AND MAKING HIM KNOWN

Lutheran Women's Missionary League
www.lwml.org

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Nancy Graf Peters
editor@lwml.org

ASSOCIATE EDITOR & FEATURES EDITOR
Beth Foreman

BIBLE STUDY EDITOR
Sharon Rapp

CHRISTIAN LIVING EDITOR
Sheila Lutz

MISSION EDITOR
Cheri Fish

NEWS EDITOR
Pam Knepper
newseditor@lwml.org

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Amy Gill

LWML EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT
Kay A. Kreklau president@lwml.org

VICE PRESIDENT OF CHRISTIAN LIFE
Eden Keefe

VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATION
Nancy Bogenhagen

VICE PRESIDENT OF GOSPEL OUTREACH
Shelley Moeller

VICE PRESIDENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES
Carolyn Blum

VICE PRESIDENT OF SPECIAL FOCUS MINISTRIES
Pat Reichert

RECORDING SECRETARY
Joy Dougherty

TREASURER
Lois Anderson

PASTORAL COUNSELORS
Rev. John Heckmann
Rev. Dr. Robert Roegner

MEETING MANAGER
Marie Chow

STRATEGIC PLAN FACILITATOR
Shari Miller

PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR
Debbie Larson

LWML MATERIALS
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR
Norine Stumpf

(800) 252-LWML(5965) • lwml@lwml.org
P.O. Box 411993 • St. Louis, MO 63141-1993

TDD/TTY through Missouri Relay
(800) 735-2966 • FAX (314) 268-1532

LUTHERAN WOMAN'S QUARTERLY (USPS 322-660) is published quarterly — spring, summer, fall, and winter — by the Lutheran Women's Missionary League of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, P.O. Box 411993, St. Louis, MO 63141-1993. Periodicals postage paid at St. Louis, MO. Canada #R129889093. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to LUTHERAN WOMAN'S QUARTERLY, P.O. Box 411993, St. Louis, MO 63141-1993. Annual subscription rates: 10 copies or more to one address, \$5.00 per year; individual subscriptions (paper and/or electronic), \$6.50 per year. Single issues available for \$1.75 plus postage. Call office. (Available in Braille, large print, or on cassette tapes free from Lutheran Blind Mission, 7550 Watson Road, St. Louis, MO 63119.)

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version (NIV). Copyright © 2010 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House.