

## **Where to find spiritual people? Your own neighbor!** **Story of Catherine Brosnan**

One of the rituals when a person moves from one place to another is to answer, “Who are you?”, “Where are you coming from?” and “What you do.” After traditional polite answers, they want to know more, in details. They want to be sure. At the same time if the person that moves is interested in music, gardens, astronomy, books or puppets, is logic that she or he will look for those having the same interests. In my case, I am interested in spirituality. However, where to find someone interested in such a topic? Many times, there is no need, spiritual people attract themselves.

Answering the normal questions about my activity to my new neighbor in Spain, Catherine Brosnan, and making some remarks about the importance of spirituality in daily life, for our peace of mind, for our relation with others, and for our own wellbeing, with both hands, she started to point to herself. “I am a proof of all that,” she said, and immediately she told me her story. “I tell my children, that when they bury me they have to ask for a discount. Through several operations, they have been taken away pieces of me.” She laughs, opening her big blue eyes, and shaking her head a bit, as Irish people only can do, when it is connected to death, funerals and burying. “I was diagnosed with MG or Myasthenia Gravis, and given only five months to live.”

With a lot of discretion I asked, “This was some time ago, or...” “Oh, yes,” she says, “it was nearly four decades ago. I was pregnant with my second child when all started with small hemorrhages. The doctor said, ‘Let nature take care of itself.’ He informed me that there was 99.9% to lose the child. The problem was that the food didn’t pass through the placenta cord to the baby. This was a year and a half after having the first baby.” She wanted to have babies, during the delivery of the first babe; she said—astonishing everybody—“I want to have another babe”. Sadly at the fourth month and a half, she lost the baby. She was extremely emotional and very sad, and at that moment, she felt that something happened triggering the myasthenia.

She remembers well the first symptoms. It started with head pains as if she had strings squeezing her head, and when she was upset her voice changed as very nasal, unable to form words. Because of the “nose” speak, people around her, used to say: you are nose again! One day she was with her sister and a lady asked them directions, she started speaking very firm and normal, but little by little her voice changed, dragging the words, it must be so funny that the lady ran away. She and her sister started to laugh, but it was difficult for her to laugh because the face muscles didn’t work. She realized this happened when she was tired or upset, and then weakness fell on her.

As Catherine worked as a radiographer in several hospitals, she knew medical doctors and specialists. The answer to her symptoms was, “You are going to be okay,” or “You will experience a remission,” even “You lost a baby, it is normal.” However, for her, it was not normal to suddenly feel like a rag doll. From time to time, people thought she was drunk because they didn’t understand the problem. One day she wanted to put curlers on her hair, after the first one, her arms fell down and could not move them again. That was only the beginning, months later her legs failed her often, and afterwards she could not chew nor swallow food.

When Catherine was young, her father used to say to her, "Save the pennies and the pounds will take care after themselves." She decided to apply that teaching to her daily life, to take care of the little things, hoping the big things will take care of themselves. She had four more babies. In all that time, not one doctor could tell her the origin or cause of her weakness. Days when she could not move, she used to get up at three or four in the morning, when the strength came back to her, to wash dishes or prepare things for her children. Things didn't improve through the years. She was a good Badminton player, however as she was losing strength in her arms, she ended being an excellent net player, not moving too much. During the delivery of the fifth child her muscles did not work. They had to use forceps. Then her eyes lead would not close at night. She was desperate to know what her problems were. She disliked answers like "Pregnant women imagine things." She thought to save money, or even selling their home in Ireland, and go America, because somewhere someone had to know what it was.

One of the Catherine's problems was that she could not explain her symptoms properly. The first time she could do, it was when she took her second daughter, of six at that moment, to see a doctor examining her tonsils. She took courage, and talked to him, very slowly and calmly, about her nasal speaking. This doctor examined her and finally said to her, "You have a problem but it is not nasal." She felt a great relief when he said, "I don't know what your problem is, but it is not imaginary." She told me, "It was one of the best moments of my life. A doctor admitting that he didn't know, and that she was not imagining things." More than ever she dreamed to go from County Kerry, to America, and see if a doctor could diagnose her problem correctly. However this doctor told her, he was going to help her to find one, and gave the name of a specialist in Dublin. She was disappointed when the secretary said she had to wait three months. She asked to call her if he had a cancellation.

The call for an appointment coincided with a wedding in Dublin. The doctor examined her from the top of her head to her toes, including her fingernails. She remembers how the doctor was taking tons of notes. After that, he sent her to a neurologist, who looked at her and read the notes. Rubbing his hands, he said "I know what it is: It is Myasthenia Gravis." It was the first time she heard of this autoimmune disease. The following morning, he did a test to ratify the diagnosis. She had to read a long paragraph from a newspaper. At the end of it, her eyes and her voice weakened so much she could not finish. The doctor gave her an injection and she could read, move her arms, and have strength again. She cried of joy. Someone finally knew what the problem was. Then the doctor gave her the bad news, "You have five months to live." The only solution he offered was, "a major surgery, which could help a lot, a little, or shorten the five months." She thought about her five children, and it was unacceptable for her any solutions not thinking about them. She decided that the first option was the only one, go through surgery, and hope to be helped a lot.

Before surgery there was a difficult point among the doctors, if she had to take some tablets or not. She was put on the stage of the hospital's theater and was questioned by the medical doctors. Finally, they decided she had to take the tablets. The surgery consisted in cutting her sternum bone in the middle to take away the thymus gland associated with puberty, which disappears with adulthood. After several hours of surgery and having taken the tablets on an empty stomach, her stomach got cramped. She felt bad, yet the nurse was all the time telling her she was going to be OK. She has to remind her that she had five children, and she knew, what pain is, but this was much, much worse. Several doctors showed around her bed. One of them said, "An overdose of prostagmine, (the famous tablets)." In that moment her head went back, the people around disappeared, and felt how the spirit was leaving from her forehead. The only think she could think was, "Don't take me away from my little ones." Then the spirit came back

to her again. She was not aware what was going around her. When she opened her eyes, there was a priest giving her the last rites. She could not talk, but thought, "If he goes to the next patient is routine, but if he goes straight to the door then it is only for me." He went straight to the door.

Few days later, she was still there, but when the doctor arrived, she was talking "nose" again. It was as if all the surgery and what she went through was useless. She was at square one. That was scary for her. Going into the operation was comfortable for her, the oldest child was nine, and the little one was one year and a half. She continued taking the tablets and made a good recovery. They told her that her lungs recovered because she never smoked. She went home, and from time to time, she felt compelled to have a bit of cheese and milk, that relaxed her and helped her to recover energy. She decided to take fewer tablets than ordered by the doctor. The recommendation was to take seven tablets; she felt that with three was enough. Years later she went to a conference, and the doctor giving the lecture said he did a discovery, "That taking seven tablets will reverse the effect, and instead of given strength it will give weakness. That was a confirmation for her to take no more than three.

After her surgery, it was supposed never to have a babe again. However she got pregnant, the advice of the medical doctors was to avoid it. She went ahead and delivered her sixth child. As soon as that happened, she never was weak again, and never had to take the tablets prescribed for life. She was sent to Dublin, for possible problems, but they never happened and she never had a problem with the baby. That baby is now thirty-five years old, healthy, and with no consequence of the Myasthenia. When he was seven, he heard two neighbors talk about her mother, when she nearly died. The son went into the house very sad, because he realized it was during the time he was born. He thought that he was responsible of his mother's sufferings and near death experience. That was a great opportunity for her to tell him a story. She wanted so much to have babe, and prayed that he came, and she wanted to live so much for him that she lived. Not only she got healed, but also because she had him, her problems never came back. The boy changed from sadness to great joy!

In a meeting with other patients who had Myasthenia, all had to say something about their recovery and remission. When it was her turn, she was the only one to say: Healed!" Some considered that, following the medical opinion, they never were going to be healed, only improve, and have remission. Her answer was, "Thirty five years of not having any reappearance and not taken any tablets, is for me enough proof to be considered healed."

Years later, Catherine had breast cancer, her breast was removed, and she was healed. Finally, I asked her, about her understanding of why she had to go through all these problems. Her positive answer was: "To be able to help others!" And this is exactly what she is doing. She volunteers to help people who want to talk a person, who went through the same problems. From the spiritual perspective, God wants her to believe and be useful. Many times, she receives messages, from what she calls "her angels", and she learned to obey. She gave several examples of being a good listener and the importance to believe. In one case a man—who was a priest—said to her that all her positive ideas were only words to tell him, ordered by the doctor, but he didn't believe she was healed. Sometime later, he died. The old axiom is: believe and you will be healed. Jesus said that all is possible for those who believe.

In another case, she had a valuable vase on the piano. One day she wanted to put a frame with a picture, and she received the message not to put the frame behind the vase. She looked and realized that never the frame was going to touch the vase. Two days later, she went into the

room and her son said, “Mom, I don’t know what happened, but I not even touch the piano and the vase crashed on the floor.” She realized her fault not following the inner voice advice. She looked at me, and smiling said: “Always happens if you don’t listen!!” When asked about how she can explain her near miraculous healings, her answer was: “My foundations since childhood were good.” Catherine told me more beautiful experiences about being ready to listen when the angelic divine voice speaks. I treasure those incidents as spiritual gems.

Catherine experiences tell about listening and being obedient to our inner voice, to never fell defeated, to know how to trust, to take positively the most dramatic situations as learning experiences, and use that knowledge to help others. Yes, there are spiritual people everywhere, we can benefit one from each other, when we are not afraid to speak up about our own spirituality, and we are ready to listen to their meaningful stories.

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