

WHAT

Cathy Knew

BY SUSAN WINTERS

My friend Cathy hadn't been to school for several days, so I called her mom and found out that she was in the hospital being tested for mononucleosis. I went to see how she was doing and to give her a hard time about having the so-called "kissing disease."

When I arrived at the hospital, she was sitting up in bed quietly. I asked if she had mono, and who she'd been kissing.

"I don't have mono," she said. "It's leukemia."

I was speechless. It couldn't be true—not Cathy. I immediately tried to think of some way to make this all better. Then a thought occurred to me.

"You got your patriarchal blessing, right? Does it say that you will be married and have children?"

"Yes."

"Then," I concluded, "you'll be okay."

"I hope so," she said. "But sometimes our blessings are for the next world as well."

The next? I didn't want to hear anything about the next world. She was living in this world, and I wanted it to stay that way.

We hugged and cried, and finally I had to go.

Over the following several months Cathy went through chemotherapy. She lost all her hair. The lining of her mouth became so raw that it was painful for her to eat. She was nauseated all the time. Her immune system was weak, so she was susceptible to infection. Anyone who went into her room had to put on a hospital gown, gloves, and a mask.

I visited her almost every day. She was usually too sick to talk, so I just sat with her. Through all this she remained at peace with Heavenly Father. She said she had faith in His plan for her.

To me it was simple. Faith precedes the miracle. Cathy had great faith. I had faith in her faith. Her being healed was just a matter of time.

Eventually Cathy was able to come back to school. She wore a bandana and had planned to wear a wig until her hair grew back. But when her hair started to sprout, it was really itchy, and she couldn't stand to wear a wig. A good friend of hers shaved his head as a show of support.

Cathy jumped right into her classes. She

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even started marching with the pep club and spending time with her friends. For me, it was a relief when things seemed back to normal. Toward the end of the school year she ran for a student body office and won.

I was so happy to have my friend back. Everything was just like it had been before the cancer. Her faith had worked, and she was healed—or so I thought.

Around Christmas, Cathy started to get sick again. She went back into the hospital for another round of chemo, but this time it was different. When I went to visit, she was weaker. Her body had already been through so much that she just didn't have any strength. I think she knew that she didn't have much time left on earth because she was quietly saying good-bye. I was devastated.

My friend Cathy died shortly after her 18th

birthday. No one had more faith in Heavenly Father's ability to heal than she did. So why had she died? What was faith good for if people like Cathy still died? I didn't understand.

Slowly it dawned on me. I might not understand, but I knew that Cathy did. Her faith allowed her to have peace as she trusted in Heavenly Father's plan for her. Sometimes we think that if only we have enough faith, our problems will be taken away. But because of Cathy I learned that faith is what helps us accept Heavenly Father's plan. Then we can say, "Thy will be done," and really mean it. **NE**