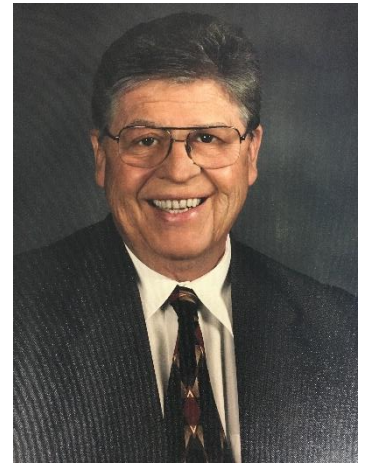


The Story of St. Mary's Child Center as told by Bill Carson

Are they miracles or merely coincidences? Perhaps there is no ready answer but follow the sequence of how the new 10,000 square foot St. Mary's Child Center became a reality and then you decide.

September 1986 – Pat Clancy, an Indianapolis businessman, was serving as Chairman of the Board of St. Mary's. The 25 children being helped were in a dilapidated small building. Literally the walls were in danger of falling down. Clancy called his friend Bill Carson, Chief Executive Officer of the Indiana Builders Association, to ask if he would have a builder come by to assess what might be done to repair the facility. Coincidence!



Bill Carson

- Two days later, Bob Thompson, a successful builder-developer, called Carson to pick him up to watch the Colts practice in the Hoosier Dome. Carson asked Thompson to take a left to see a problem dealing with children. At the site, Thompson told Bill Brown, the Director of the Child Center, that the building was a health and safety hazard and that it couldn't be repaired. Thompson, struck by the sight of the children, added, "However, Mr. Brown, don't worry about it. We'll build you a brand new building within two years!" Brown then called Clancy to relay the conversation with these two strangers while never believing such a possibility. Miracle or Coincidence?
- In a meeting of Thompson with city personnel, some were very emphatic that the city was not in the business of giving away land – for any cause! Thompson finally made one statement that left the room in silence. He said, "Maybe we're talking about different things. I didn't come here to ask you for any favors for me. I came here to ask you for use of unproductive land you now own for disadvantaged children of our city. The issue is whether or not you personally care about the well-being of those children and whether or not you wish to use your powers to make a difference in their lives?" He then added, "Or you can simply turn your backs on a future generation of Indianapolis. These are your kids too!"

Something touches their hearts and hardened opposition gave way to a room full of pure love obsessed with making this happen. It was resolved to convey the property by legally allowing credits for improvements of the site to make it affordable. A \$200,000 site ended up costing \$400! Miracle or Coincidence?

- When Thompson crews were razing a huge brick building, formerly used as a repair hub trolley cars, Thompson was overheard on his truck radio by Jim Carey, President of a large trucking company. Bob's call number was "31" and Carey heard him telling his crew that they had to schedule and rent large trucks to carry the debris away. Carey was moved by hearing the cause and he called Thompson on the truck radio. He said, "Hey 31, I hear the cause and I want to haul all that debris for you" (a job that would have cost thousands of dollars). "However, because of our contracts," said Carey, "the only time I could do it is if we have a heavy rain!" Bob's reply was, "Sure appreciate the fine offer, but we must stay on schedule and there is no rain in the forecast whatsoever!"

Late that same evening heavy storms and rains deluged the city. Carey's trucks were lined up for two days and the site was cleared. It continued to rain, that is, until the last truckload was leaving. Then the sun broke through the clouds. As Thompson and Carey put it, "This was eerie!" Miracle or Coincidence?

- During development, the massive footers of the old building had to be dug out. Thompson decided to bury them elsewhere on site. While digging the hole, a 150 x 150 foot section of space was discovered to be pure sand under the surface, a rare discovery. The sand was extracted to make room for the burial of the footers and provided more than enough material for all the construction requiring sand. Total savings were in excess of \$20,000. Miracle or Coincidence?
- On a very cloudy day, a 50-ton crane was digging for a sewer lateral. Its giant claws made one memorable dig that caught the eye of the superintendent, who happened to walk by at that very moment. It was a copper scratch mark along a very old water line that had not been previously located. His alertness in seeing a small shiny sparkle on a cloudy day saved that water line from bursting and doing considerable site damage. A one-eighth inch variance of striking the water line exactly where it was scratched as well as the superintendent noticing it, saved many thousands of dollars. Miracle or Coincidence?
- During the project, hundreds of contractors and suppliers provided very expensive services and materials free of charge. Others sent cash donations. Most contributed because they were moved at learning of the project. Miracle or Coincidence?
- At the end of the construction project, Thompson was advised that the project was short, \$25,000. Thompson accepted the fact that aside from all the services his company had given at no charge (which totaled many thousands of dollars), that he would simply have to personally pay those bills. Two days after being told this, St. Mary's received a check for exactly \$25,000 from the Hulman Foundation. Miracle or Coincidence?



St. Mary's building construction

Midway through construction, Bill Brown, still in shock that all this was occurring, learned that he had terminal cancer. He hid that fact from everyone until a couple of months before project completion when he was hospitalized. Of the parade of people who visited him in the hospital, all trying to lift his spirits, all he would ask is, "How does the new building look? Is it about done?"

Then Bob Thompson made his visit and he reminded Bill sternly, "Look, Bill, you and I shook hands on an agreement and that was that you would help see this project to completion and would be there for the dedication ceremonies. I expect you to hold up to your agreement!"

Bill Brown rallied and even though very ill was the proudest man on earth at the 1986 dedication ceremonies. He stood tall with moist eyes as Bob Thompson told the crowd, "This is the biggest little building in Indianapolis!"

It's just too much to consider that all these events were mere coincidences and luck. Maybe for some, a "Divine Plan" cannot be comprehended. However, we cannot discount the power of such a true story, especially when so many good people were mysteriously directed to do so many good things for so many children. And how could so many obstacles be so mysteriously removed throughout the entire process?

It makes sense to accept all these things as miracles. And if they were miracles, some angel up there had to be the superintendent of constructions of St. Mary's Child Center in Indianapolis, Indiana. That being the case, then it follows that Bill Brown is up there right now smiling and overseeing the construction of another miracle child center somewhere in the world right now.