

# JOSE CRUZ – A MAN OF MIRACLE

from the Jose Cruz Book of Miracles

## CHAPTER ONE – A LIFE CHANGES IN A MOMENT

Toledo. It's the only city in Spain that's in the Bible, a city surrounded by water, an enchanting old world adventure of gardens and old churches and castles draped in vines and flowers of creation and color, so many colors.

I was born in Veracruz, but my parents were Spanish and took me to Spain and Toledo when I was only 14. It was a great upbringing, only a half hour from Madrid, and so I was raised in a life of culture. That's where I was, at my parents house in Toledo when I got the call. I had gone there to visit my parents, the long flight from Sandiego, and for what reason? It would be obvious to me once I was there, almost 24 years ago now.

I was at my parents house, a beautiful enchanting villa on a Street with billowing colorful flags, and music, always music coming from somewhere, a cafe, and on this day from a four piece Spanish band, dressed in 16th century regala, but it was in my parents garden that I got the call and I was told my business partners had swindled me out of a grand golf course and luxury development in San Diego, and that I was lucky I had left because they would have had me killed.

First the shock, then the realization that it's true, your life has taken a tumble and thats when I first saw the cross that changed my life. I had gone for a walk and came upon a beautiful church that I had seen so many times before but today the light, the sunlight, lower in the sky because it was the fall, and it seemed to flare just for me through the wonderful curves and details of the carving in stone the church had created their cross with. I knew then that I wanted to just create jewellery celebrating crosses.

It wasn't until I returned to California and attended the del mar rock festival though that I truly found my purpose, The Del Mar Rock festival is a festival celebrating minerals and crystals, not rock music. That's when I first saw the small cross, the Staurolite cross. As a jeweller I was already taken by and committed to creating wearable crosses but when I saw the staurolite i said thank you God I'm just going to make jewelry with your cross now.

That was more than twenty years ago and how this story starts

## CHAPTER TWO – THE DAY I ARRIVED

When I returned to San Diego I had no idea the reception I'd get from the partners who had stolen my business out from under me and threatened to have me killed. I called them and said, listen, I want to meet, no hard feelings, I want to explain a few things.

To say they were perplexed would be an understatement, but the look in their eyes when I told them they could keep my money, my investment, with my blessing, priceless. They had no words just mouths agape and those eyes big like blinking headlights.

‘Yes, I can’t say I wasn’t angry and in shock when I got the news there in Spain, but then something happened, I was made witness to something and so what you all have done, let your conscience struggle with you if it does, but not on my account, because losing everything has given me a reason to live my purpose under God’.

And that was it. I’ve never looked back on letting go of 26 million dollars and so much I had spent so many years working on.

I landed in Cabo San Lucas, clear skies, and with an open heart, and as I stepped out to the stairs on wheels they had pushed up to our aircraft I closed my eyes for just a moment, and felt the hot breeze, and the freedom of it. I felt alive and that first step was the greatest step I had felt in so long a time.

The first cab pulled to the curb and the driver helped me with my bags and the door as I got in and waited for us to lurch forward and to the highway.

‘Take me to best hotel in the center of Cabo San Lucas’.

Less than an hour later, the drive winding us through San Jose and then down the corridor past the new hotels being built, still a far ways from the Cabo that exists today, but breathtaking a drive as you might ever take, and then into town to a hotel called Casa Bella.

The lady at the front desk, on my request booked me for one week to start, gave me room number one. I had a view of a beautiful courtyard, and a free breakfast, and it was so tranquil and enchanting. I knew I was in the right place, but I had yet to find out why it was even more profound a choice I had made. On my first breakfast while reading the paper, looking at the results of the Monaco Grand Prix, my favorite of the Formula One Series, a lady came and stood by the table.

‘Excuse me señor, not to interrupt, but I am one of the owners, and I would like to welcome you to Casa Bella. If there’s anything you need let me know’.

Without a hesitating thought I replied that yes there was something perhaps she could help me with. I asked if she might know where I might find the best location close to the hotel where I could set up the best jewelry store in Cabo San Lucas.

I still get goosebumps when I think of the words she said. She said, ‘Sir, God has been saving a place for you right outside the hotel. A year it’s been vacant and waiting for you’.

She said it exactly like that. So we took a walk. I saw it. ‘I want it’, I said.

I signed the contract that same afternoon and the next day with her help found the right men to come and help me create what became the number one and most elegant beautiful jewelry store in Cabo San Lucas for the next ten years.

This is where the journey really began as I took to my pledge to create jewelry only using what God had created and led me to.

## CHAPTER THREE

### A SUBWAY SANDWICH

Not far from Tierra Amorello New Mexico hidden in the rocky landscape is a mine. The entrance to the mine is hardly big enough for a person to squeeze through. Unless someone pointed it out to you there would be almost no way for you to see it. It's almost cleverly placed behind other big boulders, and on an incline. Unless you climbed up on the boulders and looked carefully downward, you would never know its there. Inside the mine things aren't much better. It's claustrophobic, and in some places, you have to actually crawl along to find Staurolites. You get the sense the mine was created for people who were 4 foot 2.

Once upon a time there were thousands of Staurolites embedded in the walls of this cavern. Today you might search for hours and not find a single one. I can only imagine what it may have been like to be the first to discover it, Hopi, or Navajo, or some Apache warriors, long before the Spaniards came in their armada of ships to pillage Mexico and then travel north to where the mine is.

I wonder what those very first tribes, the ones who lived in Pueblos, and first farmed the land where the Staurolites are, what did they think or feel when they came across this hive of powerful rock crosses?

The first time I made my way into that ancient darkness and shed my flashlight on its walls, to me I felt I had found a wall of hope, it was like I found a sacred church, millions of years in the making, and each Staurolite just waiting to protect someone, to be someone's miracle.

Science has defined what the Staurolite is made of, but not why or how this cross shape has been carved into its elements. Why this shape, and although each cross is unique, in this way, they are all the same.

It crystallizes in the monoclinic crystal system, has a Moh hardness of 7 to 7.5 and the chemical formula:  $\text{Fe}^{2+}_2\text{Al}_9\text{O}_6(\text{SiO}_4)_4(\text{O},\text{OH})_2$ . Magnesium, Zinc, and manganese substitute in the iron site and trivalent iron can substitute for aluminum, if you want to get technical.

And why its reputation, where did it start. Lindbergh crossed the Atlantic with a Staurolite in his pocket. Roosevelt had one with him when he led his troops into battle, and during his whole presidency. Leonardo DiCaprio, Tom Cruise, Raquel Welch, Charlize Theron, they all have a Staurolite cross. I know this because I sold each of them one, not Lindbergh or Roosevelt obviously, but to the others I did for sure.

I've had so many emotional reactions from people, some actually have broken down in tears the first time they held one. That's what makes my film and book so exciting to me, I get to try and answer every question and put some light on the deep mystery that's connected to the Staurolite cross. This is as much a journey of my learning as well.

It's hard for me to believe that it's been over twenty years since I first stepped foot into that mine. That was 3268 crosses ago. Back then my partner and I would harvest 400 crosses in a year knowing that there were plenty still available for the next year. This last year, my partner who harvests the Staurolites for me, found only twelve, and most of those were very small, beautiful though, almost gold tinged, not grey, but still powerfully connected to this beautiful Staurolite story.

Perhaps it's my imagination, but no, because I do feel a stronger frequency in the smaller Staurolites, maybe a more focused energy, or whatever it is that brings so much courage, faith, protection, and the many miracles as well, to people's lives.

Maybe it's nostalgia setting in, because I know that these are the last crosses from my mine so I feel something more profound now. Maybe this is the reason I feel that this book is important to get written and the film to get done. The story for me is coming to a close. I just turned 86 years old, and it feels like there's a special irony knowing at my age, after all I have been through, that my story also closes with the last Staurolites we are finding

But I'll explore all that in chapters coming, now though let me take you back to year three of Jolla Bella when the store was finally getting a certain notoriety, and the Staurolites were abundant, and Cabo was becoming more and more the destination to come to in Mexico. By then I had created and sold close to 300 Staurolite crosses, which everyone who got one was given a number and recorded into a small accounting style book.

But around that time something else started to happen. After a year or so people started to return to the store, to Cabo, but came to see me, to share a story about their Staurolite cross, not just the sense of something they felt but actual, in some cases, miracles they say they experienced.

One gentleman told the story of a drive home from the bar he worked at, late, and coming to the high curve by the San Jose surf break, another car had jumped the meridian and he, trying to avoid it, swerved away, but in his turn of the wheel he lost control of his car and headed for the metal barriers, put there to keep people from going over the high cliff to the rocky ground below.

He said, and I paraphrase slightly, 'I saw the barrier, I had no time to do anything, but enough time to accept the realization of it, and as I hit the metal of the barrier, and felt the car lift and start to sail over, in what seemed like forever but was in reality less than a second, I let go of the wheel, closed my eyes, and held my cross tight. And free fell the 25 feet or so the first ledge below'.

He showed me the photo from the newspaper. The headline read, 'THE MIRACLE OF JUAN CARLOS FLORES'. In the photo he stood next to the wreckage of his car, just a crushed beer can it looked like, the door partly unwedged, how he climbed out, and not a scratch on him, I have no idea, well I do, a

miracle, because not a single scratch on him, even though what was left of his car hardly seemed like it had room enough for a child to squeeze into, never mind him, unscathed, squeezing out.

‘Thank you Jose, this cross saved my life’.

There was also the Young girl in Law School who couldn’t afford her tuition and was having to face dropping out, which was heartbreaking for her, having worked so hard to get where she was. I told her to kiss her cross and hold it tight, and then just ask it for what she needed. And just keep at it, not hoping for miracle, but instead I told her, say it like you expect one.

The next day she came into the store with the most joyful relaxed beautiful smile across her face. She said she did what I told her, then went to the casino, and within ten minutes she won the Brand-new Ford Mustang, the grand prize of the casino, which had been on display for nearly 18 months, unclaimed. She won it, and now she could sell it and finish her law degree. I maybe wouldn’t have told her to go to the casino, but then again who can say how a miracle finds us?

And there was a woman named Maria. She came in the store and said, ‘I live in Cabo San Lucas, I’ve heard of your crosses, I need three’.

She had two daughters so one for each but she also had a son in law who after a bad accident had been in a coma for eleven months. She wanted one for him.

I told her to take the cross to his bedside, cup your hands over his closest ear to you and just tell him, ‘I have a cross, it’s created by God, I have faith you are going to be ok, you’re going to wake up’. And then see what happens. If nothing, well, no harm done. But have faith that it’s going to work.

A week later Maria came back. ‘You’re not going to believe this, but my son in law woke up yesterday, and his first words were, ‘can I get a subway sandwich?’

‘So did you get him one’, I asked. ‘A foot long barbecue chicken.’ she answered

I decided then, because there were other stories as well, which I will share of course, as I go through the hand written words that inspired me to do what I’m doing now, but it was then that I had the idea that I needed to get a journal of some kind, something elegant, something worthy of the task, so that whenever someone came back to the store to share their story, I would be ready and get them to write their story, in their own hand writing, into the book.

I was leaving in a few days for San Diego, and then New Mexico, where I would finalize the deal on the property the Staurolite mine was on. I would finally put some closure on all my business ventures and connection to San Diego, and although I had no idea the vast wealth of the spiritual road that was unfolding, I did have a pretty clear notion that something profound was happening in my life.

That’s when the first story walked into the store.

Chapter Four

## Six Crosses and Three Weeks to Live

I remember the day, or more specifically, I remember how distinct this man was, as I looked up from my itinerary for my trip north. Standing there in my doorway. I was so preoccupied I hadn't even heard the door open as the gentleman came in, but neither did my assistant Luna hear him either, but I felt something different in that moment, like the energy in the room had shifted, or became more intense. I will never forget him standing there, a silhouette almost, and so calm.

'Oh, hello', I said, 'So sorry, I didn't even hear you come in the door. I am just in the middle of arranging a trip for tomorrow so I'm a bit preoccupied. What can I do for you?'

'Well', he said 'I need to purchase five crosses, one for each of my kids, and one for my wife as well'. He continued, 'my kids are heading back to Florence, Italy, we have a vineyard there and I want to give them all a gift.'

It turned out he was Italian but he spoke perfect Mexican Spanish, like a native. He spoke perfect English too, and Italian, of course. He picked out the five he wanted and was ready to pay when I asked him, 'and what about yourself?'

'I don't need one', is all he said.

'Why not?' I asked.

'I just don't'. He had a roll of cash and seemed impatient to close the deal and get going.

'I've never felt this before, but I have to say, I think you do need one'. I said.

'I don't need one, and I'd like to get going.' he said

'I'd like to give you one as a gift'. I said.

'No'.

'but I insist'.

He just looked out the window as if his only option now was to just ride out this conversation, hoping that I would just let things go.

'How about this, if you don't tell me why you don't need one, and then take my gift of a cross for you, I am not selling you any crosses'.

'you're serious'? He asked, as in 'you can't be serious'.

I just stared, he continued, 'honestly, I don't want to talk about it'. I didn't say a word, I just looked at him straight into his eyes, because something in those eyes was so powerful, so real, I just stood there waiting.

'Ok', he says, 'I'll fucking tell you, ' but he said the swear word in Spanish, 'I have been to the best doctors in Mexico City, Italy, and in the U.S. and every one of them has told me the same thing, I have less than four weeks to live. I have four kinds of cancer, they are eating me up, so I gathered my family for one last trip here in Cabo and I want to give each of them a cross to remember this trip and our time together here always. Are you satisfied? '

I looked over at Luna, my assistant, and like me, in that moment, she too was speechless, almost in tears. I showed her which cross to give him, just nodded towards it, and she gently went and picked it up and then put his Staurolite around his neck.

'Thank you, ' he said, and he left.

The next day I left for San Diego. As difficult as it was going to be I knew that it was time, that I needed to collect my past, and mostly the many pieces of jewelry I had created in my previous life, all beautiful, and worthy to sell in Cabo. They were still there in the jewelry store that I had created but then gave to an old friend to take over.

I arrived at my old jewelry store late in the afternoon. The store, in an affluent suburb of San Diego was also called Jolla Bella. It was good to see my friend, a friend who was not connected to the sinister partners who once hired a sicario to kill me, although I remember how my friend had warned me of them. It has been a long and interesting life.

I was happy to see my friend after so long and that all my work was as I had left it. He had boxed up all my old jewelry, all of them kept safe, even the few pieces that were inlaid with actual sapphires and rubies. He could have sold those for a handsome profit, but as good friends are, he did not.

We put the treasures into my rental car and with a hug and a handshake he wished me well in my future life. The store though I noticed was four doors down from a Barnes and Noble book store. That is where I found my journal.

It was the right size, leather bound, with an angel embossed into the cover. I looked at its blank pages, and I knew then I had found my book. I knew then my purpose, and it would be these empty pages that would someday be filled that I would have a profound story to someday share.

I had no idea though, as I said, just how powerful an idea was unfolding on those empty pages.

## Chapter Seven

(I have skipped chapters five and six, which tell the more descriptive details of my trip to New Mexico. There will be time to share those chapters. But for the purpose of this introduction, I jump ahead to Chapter 7)

### The Ghost from Italy Returns

Sometimes, if you open your heart to it, you can feel the evidence of God in the signs he puts before you. A horoscope prediction in a newspaper you never read that today for some reason is clearly

pointed towards you, 'Yes, you must call your mother today', it says. Or a billboard on a highway you are driving past, a Nike ad that says, 'You can do this'. Just as you said to yourself, 'I don't know if I can do this' driving to the hospital to see your mother for the last time.

So, what would be the odds that on my return to Cabo, with my empty journal, that the first story would end up being the most profound of them all, although there are some pretty intense stories coming. But what odds are there that it would be the stubborn atheist who had a month to live at most who would walk back into the store to write the first story in my new journal?

STORY NUMBER ONE.

I had put a bell above my door so that now when it opened it chimed a short pleasant bell sound, and I would know a visitor arrived. Sometimes when I was actually doing the work of being a jeweler my focus could get pretty intense, and I would be oblivious to the physical world. My daughter said to me once, 'when you are working someone could steal the boots off your feet and you wouldn't notice'.

That was true. But not today, not only did I hear the door chime, I felt the same presence I felt a couple months earlier when he first came to see me. Then I heard his voice, so distinct, only this time, a happier version of it.

'Jose, I have quite a story for you,' he said.

'Hello my friend, this is great news because I just bought a journal for you to write your story into'. I said back to him.

It was a beautiful moment as I watched him write down word by word on the first page of my journal the accounting of a miracle that he had just experienced. He didn't even need the whole page but he seemed to enjoy the writing of it, because he took his time and he smiled the whole while.

'Of the four types of cancer that I had, I now have none, and except for what's left of two of the tumors, which are benign. I am pretty much cancer free'.

I remember the last words he had said to me some two months earlier, before I left on my trip north, the day he got the crosses. He said, 'I'm sorry sir, and thank you for this cross, but I don't believe in God, or in miracles. I have accepted my fate, so I am going to give one of these each to my kids, and one to my wife, and that's it. I wish you the best sir'.

(IN MY PUBLISHED COPY OF THIS BOOK THIS IS WHERE I WILL SHARE THE ACTUAL PAGE WITH HIS HAND WRITING THAT HE WROTE HIS WORDS DOWN ON).

CHAPTER 11

(AGAIN, I HAVE SKIPPED A COUPLE OF CHAPTERS FOR THIS PRESENTATION'S SAKE)



## THE POPE BLESSES MY STAUROLITE DESIGNS

It was a great run. Ten years of new friends, stories that changed my life, but even more so, changed the lives of the story tellers especially. I made friends with both some of the most wealthy and influential people of Cabo San Lucas to the many street vendors, and no home to speak of travelers, even Mafia workers, and girls of the long Cabo nights, all who wanted a cross.

The Staurolite though, more than the stories, for me, it's miracle was in the many wonderful people it connected to my life, from all walks of life, from around the world.

I remember the day though that I first met Gabby Coppell, a wonderful warm-hearted woman, with a huge smile, and an abundance of faith, and so she connected deeply and in an instant to the Staurolite.

Her husband Ernesto was also so surprisingly warm and down to earth. He always seemed genuinely interested in other people's stories over his own. He had a genuine gracious nature about him which for someone as famous as he was then, I felt was unusual, because he had no pretense about him at all.

What impressed me most about Ernesto though, besides this total joie de vive he had, was how on each of the many great evenings I spent at their house, invited for dinner, every time Ernesto would deliver enthusiastic melodies on his grand piano, Broadway show tunes, songs from the fifties and sixties, and Gabby would be his vocalist.

Maybe that was the Staurolite miracle for Ernesto because somehow, he got Gabby, who says she wouldn't sing one note aloud to save her life before she met Ernesto, somehow through his blind faith alone that she could do it, Gabby was now fearlessly delivering these songs like she was Barbara Streisand's twin sister.

They even had a recording studio put in their house and every dinner the guests and I would leave with an autographed copy of their latest album.

So inviting and infectious their energy, you would never guess that Ernesto was the genius that had created Mexico's most exceptional and prolific hotel dynasties. He was the founder and is still chairman of the board of the Pueblo Bonito collection of hotels, the most beautiful hotels you would find anywhere in the world, there are eight in total now, in Cabo, Puerto Vallarta and Mazatlán. Only their house rivals the distinction of each hotel.

Gabby recalls the first day she purchased the two Staurolites for her and Ernesto. She knew that it was deeply important that she not only got Ernesto one as well, but that she would be the one to put it around his neck. As it turned out they wore both crosses on their first major trip to Italy, and right to the Vatican where they had been invited, where Gabby actually had the Pope bless their Staurolites. So that's a claim not many jewelers can boast. The pope blessed my Staurolite designs.

## CHAPTER 14

(Again, I have consolidated what I think are the more important chapters for this presentation. Chapter 14 is maybe the most important for now.)

I STILL MISS PEPE, MY PARROT

So as two years became three, and three years moved into four, I realized that I had quite the local community of Staurolite owners as my friends now, not just Mexicans but Americans also living in Cabo, a couple from Russia, Canada, South America, France even. I decided I should do something to celebrate how much the Staurolite, and I as well, had become a worthy member of this community.

It was Ernesto who told me that the concrete workers who built all of Ernesto's hotels would take every May 3<sup>rd</sup> off, and they would carve a cross into some secret concrete part of hotel they were working on, into the drying concrete, and they called that day, 'The Day of the Cross'.

What a brilliant and beautiful thing to do I thought. So, and that's what I did as well, not the concrete part, but every May 3<sup>rd</sup> for almost ten years we would, all Cabo's cross holders, have a celebration at the Casa Bella hotel, where I first landed. It was always such a wonderful night, and even Ernesto and Gabby would sing a few of their latest hits. I miss those days, but I am forever grateful I even have them to miss

Here is a truth we all know. All things change and for me it was the rent for my jewelry store and studio which was about to double, because Cabo had grown up, and especially where I was located was becoming very desirable to everyone who wanted a piece of the Cabo pie. I could not afford the new rent, so sadly I had to pack up all my things, and I moved them to my condo apartment that overlooked the Sea of Cortez just behind one of the hotels. It was a beautiful view and it was tranquil. I lived there with my parrot Pepe for nearly five years.

Pepe was a wonderful friend who would say stuff like 'Jolla Bella', the name of my studio, and 'Kiss your cross' which I tell people all the time. When I would return to our place from work, he would chant 'Jolla Bella, Jolla Bella, Jolla Bella', until I would put my hand in his cage and he would climb onto my fingers as I lifted him out to give him a kiss hello.

There are some things you never see coming. You try and you think you can, and especially when life is good, its human nature to sense something wanting to disrupt your happiness is lurking. But that is the way life is.

That is what happened on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014 when Hurricane Odile came ashore.

The winds of a Category 4 hurricane reach 156 miles per hour. Hurricane Katrina was a category 5 which that hurricane reached 175 miles an hour. One cannot imagine the fury of such beasts unless you have survived one.

We knew the hurricane was coming but we did not know how ferocious it was. I thought I was perfectly safe and actually fell asleep to the lulling slower winds of the outer boundaries of Odile. I

awoke at three a.m. though to the horrific sounds of two of my plate glass doors that led to my balcony exploding sending glass and winds, and blistering rain into my place.

It was a terrifying situation. The wind so powerful, in an instant my eyes and mouth were filled with sand and water. I had no sense of what was up or down for the longest moment. Then I saw that Pepe's cage had been tossed into the rising water, by the blistering wind, and was swirling in circles behind the last remaining glass door of my balcony.

The water was swirling around me so fast and tossing me at will, like actual waves as if I was in the ocean, three feet of water rising, and me banging into tables, and chairs, a lamp strewn, even that box of sapphire and ruby creations I had brought back from San Diego, floating by me and beyond.

The rain outside was not coming straight down but flying instead in a blistering wall of water totally sideways. But somehow, I made my way to Pepe's cage. 'Jolla Bella, Joya Bella' I remember hearing him calling for me, and I got to him I thought in plenty time, but then, with a kind of explosive sound I will never forget, just above us, the last wall of glass exploded and sent shards above my head and his, and to the back of the condo, hitting my bed. Had I still been there I would likely have been cut to death. Little Pepe had saved my life in a way by calling out for me.

The water, the wind, the carnage, everything spinning, and again I fell beneath the surface, then resurfaced, as everything in my place was caught up in the vengeance of Odile's might, art off my walls, my sofa swept to the balcony and then gone. But the worst was the last I saw of Pepe as he and the cage went over the edge of the banister of my balcony, and down into the torment of water below.

With all my might I fought my way to the bathroom where I was able to close the door and stuffed towels under it, to keep any more water from coming in. I got into my bathtub, and trembled there for the next 8 hours, with only a small respite in the carnage when the eye of Odile came upon us.

At that moment everything went silent, eerily. I opened the door and watched the water drain from my balcony, to reveal an empty world. Even the glass from the shattered sliding doors was gone. My mattress had caught against the balcony railing, but only that. Everything was gone. Those Sapphire and Ruby creations, another box of precious stones I still had, gone.

250,000 dollars of everything I owned, art work, gold pieces of jewelry, antiques, and everything I held dear, even photos of my mother and father, letters, everything, was destroyed and gone, but mostly Pepe was gone. Oh the sorrow of lousy regrets, I still regret that I didn't save him.

That night I had to endure countless more hours as the eye passed over and the storm, the rain now in a wall flying the opposite way, returned. I huddled in my bathroom, as did my neighbor, although he was found dead, he died of an apparent heart attack from the terror of it all.

I have no proof of this but I choose to believe my cross saved me. When the final plate glass window exploded above me not one shard cut into me. I believe, although the official number will never be disclosed, that far more than a thousand people died that night.

A friend told me that it was an unspeakable disaster of death in the barrios near the mountains around Cabo. His sister survived but, in the morning, she witnessed the unimaginable as she noticed that there was someone's hair barely visible protruding from the drying river of mud and debris that had come through the arroyo as a river of everything swept down the mountain. She saw her neighbor's hair and that was all. When they dug her neighbor out from below the surface, she was still holding the hands of her two children. That is how they died. God bless them.

So many people ask if there was a God how or why does he gift us such a violent and unforgiving world. Why does he continually heartbreak us? Someday we all will know the whole truth and answers we long for now, but my question is, us, knowing how violent we and the world is, why don't we all do more because we can, we know how, why don't we help each other more, be better prepared, so we don't have such anger and blame towards God.

Why don't we build Typhoon safety bunkers like they do in India where hundreds of people can ride out the storms. Why don't we have fresh water creators like the ones Matt Damon helped create to ensure clean water for the barrios here after the storms. It's not God's fault that we have the means to end stories like the ones of the girl's hair and her daughters lost under the mudslide and we don't do anything with those means. Why do we ignore our spiritual responsibility to each other? I wish I had the answer to all that.

I found Pepe almost two days later in his cage drowned. I sat there with him by what was left of a few palm trees, just beyond the wreckage of the apartment building that had been our home for so long. I buried Pepe there because in between the broken palms it just seemed peaceful. I never thought a parrot could bring such a deep sorrow for the loss of him. I still think sometimes I still hear him, 'Jolla Bella'.

My daughter came from La Paz which had been hit as well but not like we had been. The roads were washed out many of them. So, for those two days I waited, I, along with almost everyone in San Jose and Cabo, we had no water, no food, nothing.

I miss Pepe still, and I was personally devastated losing everything, I don't really miss any of that stuff though. I miss Pepe, a little colorful Parrot. Who knew?

I know this though, Love is everything, the rest is just filler. Thanks to a friend named Kathy, a believer in the cross, who came forward and lent me 10,000 dollars I had some hope to try and start again. And so, I did. That was a miracle all in itself. Life goes on. Thank you, Kathy.

Chapter 13

The Leather-Bound Journal and All It Has to Offer

So this is where I shall finish the introduction to my book. It will change and grow as I prepare it for publishing. The book is the foundation for my film, which is my real dream, to share all of this in a really powerful honest, brave film.

So, if you are up to buy a subscription to the project. Every dollar helps. I'm 86 years old. Who knows what time is still there for me to get this done? I hold my cross pretty tight some days and I pray, not hoping for a miracle, but that I expect one, soon. So, I invite you, today, now, come join me. This is one heck of a story to share. And thank you for reading it this far.

Sincerely

Jose Cruz