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U. S. BISHOPS CONFERENCE: Bishops hear pain of victims

By

Dallas --- A ballroom full of Catholic bishops listened in silence Thursday as they were battered with evidence of enduring damage caused by their failure to confront sexual abuse in the church.

Paula Gonzalez Rohrbasker, a petite mother of two, unflinchingly revealed graphic details of the sexual abuse she suffered as a child at the hands of a seminarian --- and the emotional, sexual and spiritual fallout that continues.

"This crime has left deep scars in my soul," said Rohrbasker, who lives in Juneau, Alaska.

Michael Bland, a would-be priest who now is a psychological counselor, grieved aloud over the fact that reporting being abused as an adolescent cost him his vocation --- while his abuser is still in the ministry.

"I felt victimized again and again and again," said Bland, who lives in Chicago. "The sadness and hurt was in the sexual abuse. The anger is in the failure [of the church] to respond humanely or justly or pastorally."

Craig Martin of St. Cloud, Minn., broke down in tears several times as he described a history of depression, alcoholism and sexual aggression tied to his experiences with a priest.

The unprecedented testimony dominated the opening meeting of the semiannual gathering of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops --- devoted entirely to dealing with sexual misconduct in the church.

The prelates are to vote today on a national policy to address a scandal that has cost the church four bishops, more than 200 priests, and millions of dollars in legal fees and settlements.

Notre Dame University scholar Scott Appleby laid the blame at the black-shod feet of the bishops and their "closed clerical culture." The group's president, Bishop Wilton Gregory of Belleville, Ill., recited a list of confessions, apologies and appeals for forgiveness. He acknowledged that bishops have reassigned sexually abusive priests, declined to report criminal acts to civil authorities, worried more about scandal than the need for openness, and "at times, responded to victims and their families as adversaries and not as suffering members of the church."

Gregory called on any priests and bishops who are guilty of sexual abuse to confess.
Speaker after speaker — including four victims, two Catholic scholars and an expert on sexual abuse — urged the bishops to deal decisively with specific solutions, such as "zero tolerance" for past abusers, and with more general issues, such as greater involvement of the laity.

Atlanta Archbishop John Donoghue said the speakers changed his mind, convincing him that all priests guilty of sexual abuse — even those with a single incident in the past — should be expelled.

"I thought a priest who did this one time and led a good life with no other accusations against him should be maybe given another chance," he said. "Now I think we have to remove people like that from the priesthood."

The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, the document that provides the framework for the bishops' discussion, calls for dismissal of any priest who commits an act of sexual abuse in the future or who has committed abuses in the past. It allows single incidents of past abuse to be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Two opinion polls this week — one by ABC News, the other by Quinnipiac University — indicated that more than 80 percent of American Catholics reject the idea of giving sexual abusers in the priesthood a second chance. Bishop Kevin Boland of Savannah said a priest with a single case of past abuse should be removed. The question, he said, "is what do you do with him after that? Dump him beside the road? He's still a member of the church and must be taken care of in some way or another."

Bishop Robert Baker of Charleston, also in the province of Atlanta, said bishops needed clear understanding of the evidence required to remove a priest and how that would be done.

Anything the bishops decide would have to be approved by the Vatican. But even without Rome's stamp, American bishops can begin implementing policies in their own dioceses, said Jesuit scholar Thomas Reese, editor of the Catholic magazine America.

Blocks away from where the bishops were meeting, several advocacy groups held their own workshops and conferences.

Across the street, a few dozen protesters promoted their various causes under the eye of police. About 200 people from various Catholic causes staged an all-night vigil across the street from the hotel where most of the bishops were staying.

Janice Sevre-Duszynska of Lexington, Ky., displayed a poster of Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper" altered to include women.

Sevre-Duszynska, who was arrested for trespassing at the Cathedral of Christ the King in Atlanta during a February ordination service, said she was trying to keep alive the issue of women's ordination.

Nearby, Janet and Horace Patterson of Conway Springs, Kan., wore pendants featuring pictures of their deceased son, Eric. He shot himself in the head three years ago at 29 after years of troubled attempts to come to terms with abuse by a priest when he was 12.
Eric's picture was circulated throughout the bishops' meeting Thursday by Davie Clohessy, head of SNAP, the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests. Clohessy said he was molested by a priest over a four-year period from age 12 to 16. Standing in the hallway of the hotel afterward, Clohessy said he believed the bishops listened to him and the other speakers, but he refused to predict the outcome. Regardless of how the bishops vote, Catholics must keep watch in dioceses across the country, he said.

"We've been down this road before," Clohessy said. "The road looks a little less hilly, a little less rocky. But the last thing we can afford to do is be complacent."

Graphic Name: BISHOPS_ABUSE_DNB119_1485957
Graphic Type: Photo
Caption: National victims group leader David Clohessy of St. Louis holds a picture of Eric Patterson of Conway Springs, Kan., who committed suicide after allegedly being abused by a priest.

Graphic Name: BISHOPS_ABUSE_DNB113_1485805
Graphic Type: Photo
Caption: Catholic bishops, gathered Thursday in Dallas for their annual meeting, heard victims of priestly sexual abuse describe their pain.

Graphic Name: BISHOPS_ABUSE_DNB129_1486261
Graphic Type: Photo
Caption: Betty Guadet of San Antonio (from left), Kenneth Fisher of Anaheim, Calif., and Sara Perez of Phoenix demonstrate Thursday across the street from the bishops' meeting in Dallas.
Wayne and Judy Book came from two religious backgrounds — his Catholic, hers Protestant. They raised their children in both traditions. Now one son is a priest; the other may become a Methodist minister.

Moments after his ordination, the Rev. Theodore Book stood in the front of the Cathedral of Christ the King serving Communion for the first time as a Roman Catholic priest.

His brother, Andrew, walked down the aisle for a blessing, but crossed his arms over his chest to signify that he couldn't take the sacrament.

He's not Catholic.

As Theodore resumes advanced work in Catholic liturgy in Rome this fall, Andrew is starting studies at the evangelical Fuller Theological Seminary in California and is considering becoming a United Methodist minister. His goal is to teach in seminary.

Andrew has already passed one test of faith. In the spring of 2001, he was held for three weeks in the United Arab Emirates for distributing Christian Scripture to Muslims during a spring-break mission trip.

Parents Wayne and Judy Book are puzzled by their sons' fervor, but they understand how Theodore and Andrew — both Eagle Scouts and honor students — came to parallel but different religious paths. If it's an even-numbered year, the Book family is Catholic. In odd years, they're United Methodist.

Wayne, a mechanical engineering professor at Georgia Tech, and Judy, a school psychologist, met in Boston when both were in graduate school, she at Boston University, he at MIT. Neither was religious, but both were committed to the historic Christian traditions of their ancestors.

For Judy, born in Maine, that meant the New England Puritan stock that arrived on the Mayflower. Wayne's West Texas kin are German Catholic farmers.

When the boys came along — Theodore, "Tad" to the family, 26; then Andrew, 22 — Wayne and Judy wanted to raise them in the church. But which one?

Discussions about faith in the Books' living room encompass centuries of doctrine and schism. Both parents are intellectual and analytical, as
benefits their professions. And both, they admit, are stubborn.

His allegiance is with St. Peter, considered the first pope. She aligns with Martin Luther, the monk whose 16th-century treatises sparked the Protestant Reformation.

"I like the Catholic service OK," Judy says. "I just can't accept some of the Catholic beliefs."

"For me, it's the heritage of the Catholic Church," says Wayne.

"Protestants have some heritage," she counters.

"Up to a point," he replies. "If I'm going to be a Christian, why not be one of the originals?"

And so it goes.

They visited the Unitarians and Episcopalians as possible compromises. In the end, they decided to raise their children in both their denominations, but to worship always as a family.

Changing churches every week would be too disruptive, they thought, so they decided to alternate years. One year they would attend Sacred Heart Catholic Church in downtown Atlanta; the next they would attend Glenn Memorial United Methodist Church on the Emory University campus near their Druid Hills home.

Journeys to faith

Theodore, 6 feet 7 inches and dark-haired, is known as the contemplative, more introverted brother. Andrew, lighter-haired and 6 feet 1 inch, is more outgoing. Neither remembers feeling very spiritual as a child.

"I didn't say my prayers before I went to bed, or really think much about God," says Theodore, who came to his religious identity at Sacred Heart while in high school. He describes the experience as more intellectual than emotional. "I began to realize that if God exists, there's nothing more important than him. If he doesn't exist, then I should say he doesn't and be finished with it."

He concluded that there is no meaning in the world without God --- but "I was then faced with the question, what God do I believe in?"

He decided he was Christian because of the doctrine of the Incarnation --- that God became human in Jesus. "Then," he says, "I had to ask myself what sort of Christian I am." He echoes his father: "The only church which goes all the way back to Jesus Christ is the Catholic Church."

In high school, Andrew developed a preference for Methodism that was more social than theological. Many of his friends went to Glenn.
But during his freshman year at the University of Georgia he became very involved with the Wesley Foundation, the United Methodist campus ministry, and started trying to understand what being Christian really means.

"Instead of its being your social activity on Sunday morning, it's a way of life," he says. "Christianity isn't about what I do, it's about what Jesus Christ did."

The Wesley Foundation director, the Rev. Bob Beckwith, says he can point to no specific reason for Andrew's passion for the faith. "I just believe the Lord awakens people," he says, "and it's hard to predict who will respond."

Although he downplays the importance of denominations, Andrew has no doubt that he is Methodist. "The more I look into John Wesley and his theology, the more I find I agree with it."

Wesley, the founder of Methodism, preached that everyone can accept Jesus Christ, repent of sins and have eternal life --- a teaching that differs from some Christian groups that believe that God preordains people for salvation. As taught by Wesley, Methodism emphasizes the obligation to apply one's beliefs to improve society.

Altar calls

Having established their faith, both young men were convinced that God would reveal a plan for their lives.

During his senior year at Druid Hills High School, with an acceptance to Georgia Tech in hand, Theodore suddenly knew God wanted him to be a priest. He was walking home from a Boy Scout meeting at the time. As soon as he entered the house, he blurted out to his mother what he felt.

"It wasn't easy to tell her," he recalls, "but I thought I ought to. You could tell she was very sad. I think she felt like she was losing me."

He told his father, who came home a little later. Theodore also delivered the news to his girlfriend at the time. "She was startled, I think, more than anything."

A few days later, he went to talk to a priest who advised him, "Take your time. Go to college. Date."

He entered Tech as planned, majoring in computer science. He also went to Mass every day, and attended regular "discernment meetings" sponsored by the Archdiocese of Atlanta for people who think they may have a religious calling.

He found the Catholic requirement of celibacy for its clergy "difficult to embrace," but says he came to accept that by giving up his own family, he can be a part of every family he serves.
"There were times I wasn't so sure I wanted to be a priest," he says, "but I was always sure God wanted me to be one."

The Rev. Mario Di Lella, the Franciscan priest who oversees the Catholic campus ministry at Georgia Tech, says he can explain Theodore's vocation only as a genuine call by God. He sees in his former student, now colleague, "a fierce determination to learn and to excel."

"Right in the root of his being, he's determined to serve the Lord in the best way he can," the priest says.

Theodore completed his degree at Tech in three years and entered seminary in Pennsylvania, then studied at the Gregorian University in Rome.

Ironically, his parents say, his decision to become a priest was actually harder for his Catholic father to accept than for his Methodist mother. "When you look at all the options that could happen --- he could become a drug addict, he could become a Nobel laureate --- being a priest probably wasn't on the list," Wayne says. "You lose your progeny."

Judy had a harder time with Andrew's decision.

Andrew had entered UGA in biology, intending to be a doctor. But by the time he finished with a 3.94 average in August, he realized his heart was not in medicine, not even to become a medical missionary.

"He was going to go to medical school all along," his mother says. "I thought that would be really good for him. He was doing his applications when he e-mailed us and said, 'I don't think this is what God wants me to do right now.'"

Between studies at UGA, Andrew worked with Frontiers, an interdenominational evangelical group based in Mesa, Ariz., that focuses on establishing churches among Muslims. When an opportunity to spread the Gospel in the United Arab Emirates came up, Andrew says, he "felt it was something God wanted me to do."

His parents were worried about his safety but did not try to stop him from going.

He was handing out compact discs of Scripture on a crowded street in Dubai with two other mission workers when, as he describes it, "all of a sudden, half a dozen guys were surrounding me." They hauled him off to a police station and charged him and his co-workers with proselytizing and defaming Islam.

He denies that he was criticizing any religion. "We were just telling them who Jesus is."

After keeping him all night, the police confiscated his passport and released him from custody. Every day he and his co-workers checked back in at the police station. The rest of the time, they walked around the city, read Christian books, played cards, spent time in self-reflection and prayed.

Andrew kept in touch with home and his UGA assignments via e-mail sent to and from Internet cafes.
He says he found inspiration in the Apostle Paul, who was imprisoned for his beliefs. And he came to understand that he must glorify God despite the circumstances: "It was hard to get to that place," he confesses.

Meanwhile, the U.S. State Department was negotiating to get him home.

One day, as suddenly as he had been arrested, he was set free.

On the long flight home to Atlanta, he had plenty of time to think through his experience.

"Was it worth it?" he asks himself. "I think definitely it was worth it."

Common ground

The brothers seem to have accepted each other's paths.

"I'd heard him batting around the idea of going into a monastery," Andrew says of Theodore. "Somewhere along the way, he started mentioning the priesthood. I don't ever remember being surprised by that. He had for a long time been serious about being a Christian, being a Catholic specifically."

When Andrew was in the United Arab Emirates, "my first thought . . . was to wonder whether he was really discerning God's calling," Theodore says. "The Catholic Church in these countries tends always to be very prudent and patient. It doesn't compromise the Gospel, but it doesn't run in like the Marine Corps either."

But Theodore asked his friends to pray for his brother.

When the two are together, "we mostly stick to areas of agreement," Theodore says. "There's a lot in common between Catholics and Protestants. Almost everything the Protestants believe, the Catholics believe. We also believe a few things in addition."

"People are so quick to say, 'They're different, they're different,'" says Andrew. "Definitely there are some differences between being Methodist and being Catholic, but the core is exactly the same."

Wayne and Judy still alternate churches. They are involved in several ministries, especially through Sacred Heart. "We didn't do many of those things before our kids got involved," says Wayne. "I think kids can have a very good influence on their parents."

There's one more Book child. Rebecca, 13, is a student at Chamblee Middle School in a DeKalb County program for high achievers.
Because Glenn has confirmation classes for seventh-graders and the Catholic archdiocese for 10th-graders, she can take both, just as her brothers did. Her parents won't speculate on what Rebecca might do with her life. Neither will she.

 Asked what she thinks of her brothers' vocations and what her own plans are, Rebecca looks pensive, then grins and makes a hasty exit, saying, "I think I'd better finish my homework."

**Graphic Name:** RELbookbros2.JPG_1065898  
**Graphic Type:** Photo  
**Caption:** Andrew Book, who is not Catholic, crosses his arms to signify that he cannot take Communion as he approaches his brother, the Rev. Theodore Book, to be blessed at the Cathedral of Christ the King. Andrew, a student at Fuller Theological Seminary, is a Methodist who wants to be a seminary professor.  

**Graphic Name:** Photo  
**Caption:** Newly ordained Catholic priest Theodore Book blesses his brother, Andrew, after the ordination ceremony at the Cathedral of Christ the King.  

**Graphic Name:** Photo  
**Caption:** Parents Wayne and Judy Book, along with their son Andrew, attend the ceremony at the Cathedral of Christ the King in Atlanta at which their son Theodore was ordained into the Catholic priesthood.
Jefferson letter has unusual history
'Wall of separation' wasn't only thing on president's plate

By: 

With the long Independence Day weekend still under way, Americans are celebrating Thomas Jefferson's most famous document, the Declaration of Independence.

Few Americans can cite another important piece of Jefferson's writing, his "Letter to the Danbury Baptists." But that epistle, 200 years old this year, provided one of the best-known phrases in the country's civic debates --- the "wall of separation between church and state."

Two centuries later, the meaning of the metaphor is still discussed.

Does it mean Americans shouldn't pledge allegiance to "one nation under God"? Can taxpayer money pay for private education in religious schools? Yes to both, according to two of the most recent controversial court decisions on the role of religion and government.

In one case last week, a panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in California ruled 2-1 that the words "under God" --- inserted into the pledge in 1954 at the height of the Cold War --- violate the Constitution's separation of church and state. After a huge public outcry, one of the judges issued a stay on the decision until the case can be reviewed.

Also last week, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that tax funds can be used to support school vouchers, even for religious schools. The court's 5-4 split is evidence of the degree of disagreement over the issue.

How church and state ought to relate "is obviously a source of real social division in America today," said Brooks Holifield, a professor of American religious history at Emory University, "particularly when it comes to close judgment calls on how to apply the Constitution."

Divisions were equally emotional when Jefferson wrote his letter.

Religious liberty was not the only subject of disagreement in the New England of Jefferson's day. There was also the matter of cheese. The two subjects are somewhat related.

Baptist evangelist John Leland --- a big supporter of the First Amendment to the Constitution --- was disturbed to learn that his friend Jefferson was serving what he determined to be inferior cheese at the White House.
Thus it happened that Leland and some companions delivered to Jefferson on New Year's Day 1802 a 1,200-plus-pound round of cheese, 4 feet in diameter and 18 inches tall, as a gift from the cheesemakers of Cheshire, Mass.

The giant cheese ball was intended as "a mark of the exalted esteem" Leland's largely Baptist community held for Jefferson. An accompanying letter praised the president for his support of liberty, including religious freedom.

The concept of freedom from state interference in faith was especially important for the New England Baptists, who represented a minority faith in an area dominated by Congregationalists.

Like the Baptists of Cheshire, Mass., Baptist leaders in Danbury, Conn., appreciated Jefferson's opposition to state-supported religion.

In October 1801, some of their leaders had written to him to express their opinion that "Religion is at all times and places a Matter between God and Individuals" and "That no man ought to suffer in Name, person or effects on account of his religious Opinions. . . ."

They hoped the concept of full religious freedom, already in place in Jefferson's Virginia, would be extended to all states. The First Amendment was regarded at that time as relating only to federal matters.

With the cheese in the pantry and Leland's visit on his mind, Jefferson sat down that New Year's Day to reply.

He agreed with the Danbury Baptists, he wrote, that "religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God." He went on to say that he regarded with "sovereign reverence" the prohibition against a government-established religion and the guarantee of free expression of faith contained in the First Amendment.

By including those principles in their Constitution, Jefferson said, Americans were "building a wall of separation between Church & State."

The Danbury Baptists probably had their own interpretation as they eagerly read the letter from their president. For their descendants in the faith, there is disagreement about exactly how high and porous Jefferson meant the wall to be.

Take the Supreme Court's school voucher decision.

Richard Land, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, praises the court. "I'm opposed to any direct government funding of religion," he says, "but this is not assistance to churches or church schools. This is assistance to parents who then decide how they're going to use it."

Brent Walker, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, thinks the decision was a mistake.
"A Jeffersonian understanding would suggest that vouchers are unconstitutional," said Walker, whose advocacy and educational organization serves about 14 Baptist groups in Washington. "The government should not take my tax dollars to pay for your religion, and shouldn't take your tax dollars to pay for my religion."

On the California panel's Pledge of Allegiance ruling, the two agree. They say it was wrong.

Jefferson meant to establish a wall "between the institution of the church and the institution of the state," said Land, "not to say there could be no religious expression in the public square."

Walker concurs. "Inclusion of these two words in the pledge does not create a constitutional crisis but, in many ways, a tempest in a teapot."

The fact that the discussion continues long after the exchange of mail between Connecticut and the White House shows that Americans take their Constitution seriously, said Walker.

Tensions, even conflict, over the principles incorporated in Jefferson's famous phrase are inevitable, he said.

"We will never get to the bottom of it all," Walker predicted, "but we will continue in an ongoing conversation about how to apply those principles in a way that satisfies those goals we set out to achieve as Americans."

Graphic Name: ATLANTA JOURNAL &CONST_23116
Graphic Type: Photo
Caption: Thomas Jefferson's "church and state" stance is still debated.
Daughter's multiple organ transplants lead family to rely on faith and a mother's simple two-word prayer for her child . . .

"Heal, Kathryn"

By

Evans

For months she counted floor tiles, read the Gospels and stared at her daughter.

The logo of the hospital bed became imprinted in her brain. She can still see the letters --- H-i-l-l-R-o-m.

"This is so hard," she wrote in her journal, kept in a book called "A Path to Sunshine." "I need somebody to lean on I am so lonely and homesick. I hold Kathryn and we both cry a lot."

For more than a year, Charlotte Smith lived away from the rest of her family, spending long days in Miami's Jackson Memorial Hospital. As her daughter Kathryn hovered near death, Charlotte clung to faith.

Jackson is the Grady of Miami --- long halls lined with tall lockers, stark waiting rooms furnished with molded plastic chairs.

Within this world is the intensive care unit where every breath is an achievement, often accomplished through machinery. Whirring and beeping signify endurance.

Silence means death.

"She told me she was scared. I asked her of what. She said everything. It just breaks my heart."

Sometimes, Charlotte had the sense that it was all surreal.

She mentally returned to the big, brown house where Kathryn had darted in to chat about friends, boys, debate team, chorus. Kathryn was known in the family as one of the "smart ones," along with her older brother Jay. Younger siblings Dottie and Cliff were tagged as more social.

Charlotte, an only child, was fascinated by the relationships among her children. Now, she desperately wanted to be at home surrounded by the ruckus.
"You may ask for anything in my name and I will do it (John 14:14). Heal, Kathryn."

As she sat and waited and prayed, Charlotte watched patients come in, recover, and leave. She also saw some wheeled out, completely covered.

One who died was a young man not much older than Kathryn.

Charlotte counted on God, but couldn't shut out the cold fear that Kathryn could be next.

A constant companion

If she lived long enough to undergo it, Kathryn faced a rare and very risky operation that can be performed by only a handful of surgeons in the United States.

One of them, perhaps the best, is Dr. Andreas Tzakis at Jackson Memorial.

So, Charlotte found herself in Miami.

She would be there for Kathryn whether these days marked an end or a new beginning.

She felt a kinship with mothers around the world who helplessly sit beside sick children.

"Husbands lose wives, wives lose husbands, children lose parents, it's all here," she thought. "But mothers should not lose children. We should protect them. Did we bring them into the world to suffer? It's too hard..."

Trouble begins

It started with an upset stomach.

Kathryn, barely 17, was on Lakeside High School's science team. Charlotte, a Lakeside biology teacher, was team sponsor. Kathryn's dad, Jack, a researcher with Nutra-Sweet, was also interested in science.

Except for Jay, who was away at college, the whole family went along to watch a competition in Dahlonega on a fall Saturday in 1996.

Kathryn had never been a sickly child. The next day, when she didn't want to go to services at Warren Baptist Church with the rest of the family, her mother chalked the problem up to fatigue and Mexican food.

On Monday, Kathryn was still sick, but not even her mother, the worrier of the family, was taking her condition very seriously.
Until she vomited blood.

By the time Charlotte arrived home to take her to the doctor, Kathryn could hardly walk. In the waiting room, she wanted to lie on the floor and sleep.

Charlotte could tell by the somber look on the doctor's face that something serious might be wrong. The problem looked like an ulcer, he said.

In the few hours before they could meet with a gastroenterologist, Kathryn grew so weak that her father scooped her up to carry her into the examining room. The specialist performed some tests, then summoned Charlotte and Jack.

There Charlotte began to hate small conference rooms.

Kathryn had autoimmune hepatitis, probably brought on by an undetected early childhood virus, the doctor said. Her liver was slowly dying. Without a transplant, she probably could not live more than two years.

The news was bad, Charlotte thought, but not hopeless. The family could cope with a transplant.

Surgeons at Emory University Hospital in Atlanta bought time by installing a shunt to restore Kathryn's liver to about 50 percent capacity.

She returned to high school, and, as a senior, racked up awards as a National Merit Finalist and a Georgia Scholar.

In the fall, she headed off to Georgia Tech.

She was almost able to forget the liver problems as she began her freshman year of college, joining Alpha Xi Delta sorority and registering for classes.

Reality intervened abruptly in the university bookstore.

It happened again. She vomited blood.

And afterward, she could barely crawl out the restroom door.

Doctors unclogged the shunt, and she returned to Tech to finish her first semester on the dean's list.

But a warning had been sounded.

Medical roller coaster
By Christmas, Kathryn was tiring easily. Emory doctors put her on the transplant list and gave her a pager.

Kathryn had no pocket in the dress she wore to her sophomore sorority formal on Nov. 7, 1998, so her date slipped her pager into his coat pocket.

When it went off at the dance, about 10 friends in cocktail dresses and tuxedos followed her to Emory in a caravan.

Charlotte was surprised at how easy it all seemed. After four hours of surgery, Kathryn felt stronger. The lingering pain was normal, they were told.

But a couple of weeks later, at home with Charlotte while the rest of the family attended the Georgia-Georgia Tech football game in Athens, Kathryn began running a fever.

Doctors ordered her back to Atlanta. They wanted to do another transplant, and already had a liver.

As Charlotte and Jack waited to greet their daughter after the surgery, Charlotte's stomach knotted when she saw where she was being led.

It was to one of those little rooms.

On to Miami

Sitting there beside Jack, she found the news impossible to absorb: Kathryn's intestines were dying. Doctors gave her 24 hours to live.

Charlotte fled the hospital and ran onto the Emory University campus where healthy students rushed between classes. Kathryn should be like this, not lying near death, she thought. She wanted to scream.

She forced herself back to the hospital and the family took up the death watch.

Nothing happened.

An idea began to dawn.

"Do they do intestine transplants?" Charlotte asked.

The answer was yes, but at very few hospitals.

The family's insurance carrier, Aetna-US Healthcare, made the decision that Kathryn would go to Jackson Memorial.
But Jackson's transplant unit had no rooms available.

The family marked Christmas and New Year's Day at Emory, with Kathryn in intensive care.

Charlotte waved to Jack and Cliff on Jan. 2, 1999, as she took off in an ambulance plane with a respirator technician, a nurse, two pilots, and a sedated Kathryn. North Georgia was 30 degrees and sleet was falling.

For the two-hour flight, Charlotte felt suspended in time and space, looking out over nothing but clouds. Then, she stepped into Miami: 82 degrees, sunny, and seeming to move to the beat of Latin music.

At Jackson, Tzakis came to introduce himself in shorts, sandals and a University of Florida T-shirt.

"This," thought Charlotte, "is the man who will save my daughter."

"Two-fold plan: Get her stronger first and then a transplant. 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' (Jeremiah 29:11)."

The next months rolled up and down like a Georgia mountain road --- ground gained, then lost. Family members visiting, returning home.

For Charlotte, many days were as routine as a workday: to the hospital around 9:30 a.m., leaving about midnight every night. Twice, thieves broke into her car.

"Where is the sunshine --- OUTSIDE only --- They don't have a sick child with hopes and ambitions. Their kids are well . . ."

In June, with no end in sight, she rented a condominium.

The ocean's roar and tropical view outside her window linked her to the natural world. She wondered, "How can you have heaven and hell all wrapped up together?"

In July, Kathryn became much sicker. Doctors took Charlotte into a little room and told her to tell Jack to come. At home, he was dealing with the recent death of his brother.

A decision must be made --- should "heroic means" be used to keep Kathryn alive?

A nurse who had grown close to Kathryn piped up to say, "She's young. She deserves to live."

Kathryn rallied. But she was growing sicker.
"Back in the surgical intensive care unit, with infection and fever, dialysis, bleeding, machines breathing for her. Sickness."

She could not have known as she made the notation that she was days away from a turning point.

More hope is offered

The doctor had tears in his eyes as he told Charlotte the news --- there might be a donor for Kathryn in Mississippi.

She teared up, too, understanding that a donor meant someone had died.

Plans to have Kathryn strong for the surgery had failed. By now, she was on dialysis and a respirator. She would need, in addition to the intestine and liver, a stomach, pancreas and kidneys.

In the wee hours of Aug. 25, 1999, Charlotte sat at Kathryn's bedside with Jack and Judy Schlottman, a friend from home. She felt at peace as she listened to the music from "Evita," putting the earphone to Kathryn's ear, not knowing whether she heard.

As Kathryn was wheeled away, Charlotte kissed her with a swirl of relief, concern and hope.

Kathryn was the sickest patient on whom Tzakis had ever done a multiple organ transplant. The risk was high, but without the transplant, Tzakis thought death was inevitable --- and immediate.

Charlotte asked Judy to drive her around Miami, just so she could feel that she was moving.

Meanwhile, teams of doctors, technicians and nurses --- about 40 people in all --- were methodically removing Kathryn's old organs and connecting the new ones to her blood supply and gastrointestinal track.

The organs began working, bleeding slowed, and blood pressure and heart rate stabilized.

After 22 hours and 100 pints of blood, the operation was over.

When Tzakis finished the surgery, he delivered the news in the open --- no small conference room.

Kathryn had made it through.

"A power higher than me is at work here," he told Jack and Charlotte.

But the operation was but one hurdle. There were more to face.
The road ahead

There were follow-up surgeries, examinations, therapies.

And, there were new life-threatening dangers --- the worst, a bowel leak so severe that Charlotte was told once again to summon Jack to Miami.

Progress was fragile. But Charlotte set out to keep up Kathryn's spirits.

Every day, she pushed Kathryn to the nursery to coo over the squirming newborns.

To help Kathryn exercise, she made a chart of goals. A walk around the bed might earn a trip outside in a wheelchair or a smuggled hamburger.

Just before Christmas, she arrived at Kathryn's bedside with all the ingredients to make a gingerbread house. Decorating it with tiny candies was physical therapy for Kathryn's hands.

The whole family celebrated New Year's Eve in Miami. The next day, as 2000 dawned and alarmists waited to see whether the world would end, Jack, Jay, Dottie and Cliff were all on airplanes.

In May, when Kathryn was able to live at the condominium as an out-patient, every day brought an outing.

Mother and daughter caught fish in the surf --- Charlotte manipulating Kathryn's wheelchair through the sand --- then cleaned and ate them.

They visited an aquarium, where Kathryn was kissed by a whale.

When Kathryn asked for a dog, a dachshund they named Miami Maggie entered their lives.

But everything was not smooth. Charlotte learned that the school system could no longer hold open the job she loved. She sat in the little kitchen, hiding from Kathryn, and cried.

In October 2000 --- 20 months after they left for Miami --- Charlotte and Kathryn piled their belongings into a car and headed home via Disney World.

Earlier this month, they were back in Miami for Kathryn to complete what they hope is her last surgery, a minor operation to close a food tube opening.

She and her mother look back over where they've been. But mostly, they look to the future.
A shining example

Kathryn, 23, has just finished her sophomore year at Tech. She plans to become a doctor. Charlotte, who completed a year of part-time teaching, is slated to go back full time in the fall.

Both say they never gave up because they were afraid of letting each other down. Now, they are ready to get on with life.

"She doesn't want to be recognized as 'the transplant child,'" said Charlotte. "She doesn't dwell on her disease, doesn't use it as an excuse. She believes it happened for a purpose."

"I like to say the reason it happened to me is because God knew I could handle it," says Kathryn.

She wants to promote organ donations and offer support to people going through medical crises. She realizes she can't promise everyone a successful outcome.

But she can give them something.

"You can think of me," she said, "when you think there's no hope."

Graphic Name: LVTECHGIRL0509A.JPG_1021329
Graphic Type: Photo
Caption: Georgia Tech student Kathryn Smith, who just finished her sophomore year, is on a mission to promote organ donations and offer support to people going through medical crises.

Graphic Name: FEA LV transplant.JPG_1024034
Graphic Type: Photo
Caption: Keeping a journal was one way Charlotte Smith was able to deal with her daughter's worsening medical condition. As her daughter Kathryn hovered near death, Charlotte clung to faith, and kept making notations in her journal.

Graphic Name: FEA FV transplant.JPG_1024637
Graphic Type: Photo
Caption: As her daughter Kathryn hovered near death, Charlotte Smith clung to faith, and kept writing in her journal.

Graphic Name: slmom0609a k/o
Graphic Type: Photo
Caption: For more than a year, Charlotte Smith (left in photo) and daughter Kathryn lived away from the rest of their family.
DELUSIONS and DEMONS

When Andrea Yates drowned her five children and blamed Satan, a Georgia police chief struggled again with the loss of his own three daughters. Were his wife and Yates insane or the victims of satanic possession?

By

When Andrea Yates goes on trial Monday in a Houston courtroom for drowning her five children, Jerry Evers expects to experience disturbing flashbacks.

Since the Yates case first made the news, Evers, 44, police chief of Enigma, in South Georgia near Tifton, has been reliving Jan. 2, 1980, the day sheriff's officers came to tell him his three children were dead.

"Basically, the situation in Texas is just a remake of my case," said Evers, who has since remarried and has another family.

Yates, 37, admitted killing her four sons and daughter, the oldest 7, the youngest 6 months.

Like the Yates children, Evers' little girls died in a bathtub at the hand of their mother. As relatives played checkers in an adjoining room of the Everses' home in Leesburg, Fla., Dianne Evers held her children's faces underwater. Twins Sherrie and Carrie were 4. Baby Mandy was 2.

Both cases are full of religious undertones that raise questions about faith, madness and even Satan himself.

Andrea Yates and Dianne Evers had histories of psychiatric or psychological treatment and connections to strict, fundamentalist Christianity. Yates and her husband had as a religious mentor traveling preacher Michael Woronieck, known for the publication Perilous Times. Evers says he and his wife were part of an independent Baptist church in Leesburg that "promoted some real strong... hard-hearted beliefs" about children and discipline.

By performing her perverse baptismal rite, Yates reportedly believed her children would go directly to paradise. As her uncle attempted to pull her children from the water, Dianne Evers screamed, "They are better off with God."

Both women also expressed some desire to be executed --- Yates to be freed from the evil inside her; Evers to join her children in heaven.

Dianne Evers, then 23, was found not guilty by reason of insanity in a three-hour non-jury trial. Psychiatrists testified she was severely schizophrenic and had delusions that she was the Virgin Mary and was hearing voices telling her that her children would be better off outside this
world.

"It was like she was more like a robot than a person at that time," psychiatry professor George Barnard of the University of Florida testified after examining her. The case dominated the news in Central Florida but never gained great national exposure.

In the highly publicized Yates case, as in the Evers case, a court must determine the legal issue of whether the defendant was mentally capable of taking responsibility for her actions. Yates, like Evers, has pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity --- a defense many legal experts say stands little chance of succeeding.

Her lawyers blame a severe case of postpartum depression. But Yates raises another, much murkier issue --- the possibility of demonic possession.

She told doctors she wanted her head shaved to expose "666," the mark of the Antichrist, on her scalp.

Jerry Evers says a similar force of evil might be responsible for the deaths of his children. "I really believe it's a satanic delusion that Dianne had come up with."

That idea in itself might seem insane to many people, but others consider it credible. Americans are evenly split on the question of whether humans can be possessed by the devil, according to a 2001 Gallup survey. Forty-one percent of Americans questioned said yes, 41 percent no, and 16 percent said they were not sure. The rest gave no answer. A majority of people who said religion is "very important" in their lives --- 55 percent --- accepted the possibility of demonic possession.

The Yates and Evers cases "could be mental illness, could be demonic involvement and could be overlap," says Fred Dickason, retired chairman of the theology department at the evangelical Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. "Demons can fake anything. The problem is in our Western society, we have so discounted the spiritual world that we haven't given it proper weight in the recognition of maladies."

Religious delusions can be considered along with any other evidence when a court evaluates an insanity defense, says Bob Wilson, a former DeKalb County district attorney who is now a lawyer in private practice. "A delusion that you are the Virgin Mary or that you are possessed by the devil is . . . viable, or valid, for evidentiary purposes."

What matters, he says, is whether delusions are so overpowering that people are not in control of their actions. "We don't punish people for wrongdoing they were mentally incapable of fostering or knowing about," he says.

During his career, Wilson said, he has seen "a guy who thinks he's being controlled from outer space, one who believed the baby being born to his wife was the Second Coming, people who believed they were Jesus and people who believed they were possessed by the devil himself."

Wilson, an elder in the mainline Presbyterian Church, does not rule out the possibility of a demonic presence in some cases.
"There have been a few instances over my career --- and I'm not the only one that would tell you this --- that I can remember coming eye to eye with a defendant and I knew at that very moment I was seeing the personification of evil, call it what you will, the devil or Satan," he says. "I've seen the absolute bowels of hell in the eyes of some people. It was so overpowering as to be something you could feel down to your very soul. It's scary but it's real."

Jerry Evers, who was separated from Dianne at the time of his children's deaths, has no doubt that evil --- beyond his wife's psychiatric problems --- played a role.

An active Southern Baptist who started a ministry with fellow law enforcement officers, Evers forgives his former wife, but cannot excuse what she did on the grounds that she was rushing her children to the hereafter.

"The woman is definitely sick," he says, "but to use that as a defense to commit murder, especially of a harmless child . . . that's a slap in every Christian's face."

Visions and voices

Because religion and science often operate in different realms, mental health professionals may be ill-equipped to discern when faith moves into madness.

"There are no clear clinical guidelines to distinguish between 'normal' religious beliefs and 'pathological' religious delusions," says Dr. Joseph Pierre, a psychiatrist at UCLA's medical school.

The split between religion and the behavioral sciences begins with the lexicon, says Ralph Hood, professor of psychology at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. A psychologist may call a "hallucination" what a religious believer would call a "vision" or an "apparition," he says.

While eyebrows in some circles might rise at claims of divine visions and voices, belief in those phenomena "is certainly not, in any basic sense, abnormal," says Hood, who has written extensively about religion and psychology.

The concept of a deity with an active role in daily affairs, intervening and answering prayer "is the everyday meat and potatoes of mainstream religion," he says. "Our culture is just not very good at incorporating these experiences into the general dialogue, so that people tend to be private about them."

This does not mean that religious people never become psychotic.

If a person is religious in "normal" life, Hood says, then "that's going to be the framework in which you experience your madness."

Yates, Dianne Evers and others who express forces of good and evil in religious terms are simply using the "ultimate metaphors" of their culture, says Jack Felton, a licensed therapist, ordained minister and head of New Hope Christian Counseling Center in Huntington Beach, Calif. "If
they lived in Greek times, it would be Zeus or Hades."

In identifying with the Virgin Mary, Evers was trying to be "above reproach," says Felton, co-author of "Toxic Faith," a book about destructive religious systems.

The fear of having their children possessed by Satan could be very real to the women, he says, "but it's moved out of the real world and into insanity."

Several branches of Christianity acknowledge the possibility that the devil can insinuate himself into the lives of mortal men and women.

The Roman Catholic Church, the world's largest Christian denomination, has a long tradition of exorcism.

"The church holds that people are subject to demonic influences," says Mark Jordan, a Roman Catholic professor of religion at Emory University. Three years ago, the Vatican introduced the first new ritual for exorcism since 1614, urging, for the first time, that church-approved exorcists consult medical professionals, such as psychologists or psychiatrists, when appropriate.

A Georgia exorcism

Dickason, an evangelical minister, says he has participated in more than 600 exorcisms. In his book "Demon Possession and the Christian," he recounts how he evokes and confronts evil spirits, asking, "What do you think of the Lord Jesus?" and other religious questions.

Dickason and the Roman Catholic Church have similar lists of symptoms of demonic possession, or "demonization" as he prefers to call it. They include superhuman strength, speaking in unknown languages or strange voices, fits of rage, sudden changes in personality, fear of crowds and resistance to religious or spiritual names or symbols.

Strong tendencies to suicide or violence may be present.

College Park grandmother Mildred Mack is a believer. Earlier this month, she took her 11-year-old granddaughter to a Church of God of Prophecy for an exorcism after the child had trouble sleeping and talked in a strange voice, threatening to kill relatives and "take them to hell."

"She would have killed herself," Mack said. "I knew this.... Demons do walk this earth."

Michael Cuneo, a professor at Fordham University in New York and author of "American Exorcism," calls it "a burgeoning, booming business in the United States." Satanic involvement relieves people of the responsibility of their own thoughts and actions, he says. "We're a culture of victimization. This is a moral cop-out."

Yates may sincerely believe she is possessed, he says, but "overwhelmingly what people are suffering from is some neurological, psychological or psychiatric disorder, or, in may cases, they've taken their cues from the popular entertainment industry."
Cuneo observed more than 50 exorcisms --- Pentecostal, charismatic, evangelical and Catholic both officially sanctioned and "bootleg."

"What I saw in many cases were troubled people, confused people, desperate people, people who wanted to believe they were demonized and that exorcism would cure them of their illness," he says. "In every case I could account for what I saw in non-demonic terms."

Evers says he attempted to have his former wife committed, but mental health professionals sent her home. Andrea Yates, too, has been in and out of treatment.

Today, Dianne Evers remains in the Florida State Hospital at Chattahoochee under high security.

She still has "religious delusions," says Bill Gross, the assistant state attorney who has argued against her release. Before one hearing to appeal for a furlough several years ago, she attempted to saw off her arm. In 1995, she married a former patient at the mental hospital where she is confined.

"Every six months or so, we get a report on her condition," Gross says. "The last reports have indicated she is still unstable."

After a string of police jobs, Jerry Evers began work in Enigma a few months ago. He and his wife, Dorrie, have three children --- Jessica, 12, Jerry Jr., 10, and Rebecca, 8.

As for his former life in another family, it makes little real difference to Evers whether the devil, insanity or cruelty caused his wife to kill his children. All that matters is that they're dead and the horror of how they died.

Says Evers, "It's something I have to deal with every day."

Graphic Name: ENIGMA 5.JPG_975195
Graphic Type: Photo
Caption: Enigma Police Chief Jerry Evers believes a "satanic delusion" led his wife to drown their three small daughters in the family's bathtub in 1980. / J. \n
Graphic Name: Leesberg Florida map.eps
Graphic Type: Map
Caption: Map of Florida pinpoints location of Leesburg; dropdown map of southeastern U.S. highlights area of detail. / \n
Graphic Name: Testimony begins this week in the Houston murder trial of Andrea Yates, who poses with husband Russell and four of the five children she drowned. / Associated Press