

Blessed Carlo Acutis -The First Millennial Saint

Scene One

[Friends of Carlo stand at different points on the stage with cell phones.]

Giovanni: Hi Mario, it's Giovanni. Have you heard anything about Carlo? I think he's in the hospital.

Mario: Really! I thought he just had the flu. I'm going to call Sophia to see if she knows anything.

Giovanni: OK let me know.

[Mario pushes buttons on phone]

Sophia: Pronto, this is Sophia..

Mario: Hi Sophia, it's Mario. Have you heard anything about Carlo?

Sophia: Yes, I was going to call you. I don't think he's doing so well.

Mario: I heard it was the flu.

Sophia: No, It's much worse than that, I think it's leukemia.

Mario: What! No, he's only 15 like us. That's terrible news. What can we do?

Sophia: Well, you know what Carlo would tell us to do.

Mario: Yeah. Let's call around and get everyone together.

Sophia: OK ciao!

[Mario pushes buttons on phone]

Giovanni: Hello

Mario: Giovanni, it's Mario. I talked to Sophia. Carlo is really sick. She thinks it's leukemia. He might not make it. I think we need to get everyone together to go to church to pray for him.

Giovanni: You're right that's what he would want us to do. Ok I'll call around too.

Mario: After the amazing life he's had, all that he has accomplished, all the good he has done, I can't believe we might lose him. Did you know he was born in London? What a story...

Young Carlo: Scene Two

[On stage center stage it begins with Carlo Acutis as a baby being held by his mother. Next to him is his father and the grandparents. Behind the screen and out of sight, a large banquet table is set up where Jesus and Angels and Saints are positioned.]

Andrea: It was so good of you to come all the way from Italy. It is wonderful for Carlo to have his grandparents here in London for his baptism.

[Enter the priest from the audience. The curtain comes up revealing the angels and Saints standing with Jesus at the center and at his side is Carlo Acutis's Guardian Angel. Jesus approaches and raises his hands over baby Carlo and the Guardian Angel stands close by Carlo. The priest then says:]

Priest: I baptize you in the name of the father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit.

[The heavenly hosts standing will have their hands up.. Jesus hand on baby Carlo Jesus then backs up to be standing with the Saints and they take their seats all at the heavenly banquet table. The Grandparents say:]

Grandmother (Luana): Carlo has such a beautiful smile.

Grandfather: Will you be coming back to Italy?

Andrea: Yes. In a few months we will be coming back to Milan for work.

[The parents, grandparents, and baby Carlo priest exit the stage. The Guardian Angel stays center stage and explains:]

Guardian Angel: Greetings. I am Carlo's Guardian Angel. Andrea, Antonia, and Carlo flew back to Italy. Carlo's parents worked full time in Milan. They hired a nanny for Carlo. Her name was Beata. She loved her Catholic faith.

[The stage is now set with a table and chairs. On the table is a Bible and a Rosary]

Enter Beata carrying baby Carlo from the audience.

[Guardian Angel stands near the table. Beata enters holding baby Carlo singing]

Beata (singing): Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to Him belong, they are weak but He is strong. Yes Jesus loves me... the Bible tells me so.

[Beata sits at the table and holds up the Bible]

Beata (Speaking): Carlo, this is the Bible.

[Beata makes the sign of the cross]

Beata: This is how we pray, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

[Beata holds up a Rosary]

Beata: This is the rosary. We pray HAIL MARY full of grace

[Antonia enters and Beata hands Carlo to her]

Antonia: Thank you so much Beata, Carlo loves you.

Beata: I love him too.

Antonia: Let's go to the kitchen for a snack.

[Antonia, Beata and Carlo exit to off stage. At the same time, the Guardian Angel stays on stage and comes forward to speak. Antonia and Andrea go to rear and Beata takes seat in front row.]

Guardian Angel: Carlo grew up in a loving home. Beata talked about God, Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and the Pope. By the time Carlo was 4, he began asking his parents questions about Jesus and Mary. He thought about God all the time and prayed. When his parents took him for a walk in Milan, he wanted to stop in every Church to say hello to Jesus.

[Murals of Jesus the Good Shepherd and Mary are rolled into view on ground level. Guardian Angel exit it stage to meet Andrea, Antonia and Carlo (waiting in rear), Antonia and Andrea, process down center aisle.]

Young Carlo: Look! A church!

[They walk toward the murals indicating they are in the Church. Carlo kisses Jesus' feet and places flowers at Mary's feet.]

[They walk back up to the center stage indicating their return home and Carlo plays at the table with the sheep and Jesus doll and Guardian Angel looking over him. Andrea enters and stands beside Antonia both looking at Carlo with expressions of surprise]

Antonia: How did Carlo get so religious?

Andrea: I know I am amazed.

Antonia: He asks questions about God that I can't answer. I'm going to call my friend Lina. She is a very devout Catholic.

[Antonia uses phone on table. A phone rings. Lina seated in front row of audience, stands up holding phone receiver]

Antonia: Hello Lina, this is Antonia.

Lina: How are you? How is Carlo?

Antonia: That is why I am calling. Carlo is asking questions about God and I'm not sure how to answer. They are deep questions.

Lina: Mmmm...There is a priest, Father Ilio Carai, he is very devout. He is known as the Padre Pio of Bologna, Italy. I think he could help.

Antonia: Thank you Lina very much. I will go and see him.

[Antonia hangs up phone and walks down center stage. Father Ilio is there waiting. Andrea remains on stage and watches the scene between Antonia and Father Ilio.]

Father Ilio: Hello Mrs. Acutis. What can I do for you?

Antonia: Hello Father, thank you for meeting with me. I want to answer my son's questions about God properly. I'm not a practicing Catholic. I've only been to church three times before I got married; my baptism, first communion, and confirmation. My husband, Andrea, goes to Mass once in a while, but we don't talk about religion in our home.

Father Ilio: I see. So, you would like to learn more about our faith. Would you like to go to theology school? You would get answers there and I could be your spiritual director if you like.

Antonia: Yes. I work full time, but I will start theology school and spiritual direction with you right away.

[Antonia walks back upstairs and joins Carlo and Guardian Angel at the table. Andrea steps forward to address the audience.]

Andrea: This was the beginning of our own spiritual journey. It changed our lives. We rediscovered the beauty of our Catholic faith. Whenever Carlo asked questions about God we were also drawn into a life of deeper faith and the presence of Jesus in our lives.

[Antonia and Young Carlo are seated at the table with a Bible and Catechism book]

Young Carlo: Mom, why were we born?

Antonia: That's a great question. People have always wondered why God made us. Let's look at the catechism. We are born because God loves us and wants to share His life with us.

Young Carlo: How does He do that?

Antonia: He does it in many ways, but the most important is through the Eucharist.

Young Carlo: I want to have the Eucharist!

Antonia: That is wonderful! You are going to learn all about it. Next year you will start school at The Tommaseo Institute, and your teachers are the Sisters of Saint Marcelina. It's close to home and Rajesh, your new caregiver, will take you.

Carlo Goes to School: Scene Three

[Stage crew moves table to far side Rajesh takes stage and introduces himself]

Rajesh: I am Rajesh, Carlo's caregiver. I'm from India, working in Italy, and have a different faith from Carlo. Carlo treated me with respect and kindness and we became friends. Carlo was an only child and loved to be with other children.

[Carlo and Rajesh exit downstairs to stage 1. Parents exit stage right. Guardian Angel stays on stage. Stage 1 chairs are placed a little forward. Sister Angela and children enter and take places. Sister Angela faces the audience and children and begins her class.]

Sister Angela: Good morning. Today we are going to learn about the sacrament of the Eucharist, the miracle of the Mass, the real presence in the Mass. We actually experience heaven and earth coming together. All the angels and Saints are gathered together with us and singing hosanna in the highest with us, in the actual presence of God; the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are doing this as Jesus commanded us to do, in memory of him. But, we aren't just remembering what happened, no we actually are reentering into the events, just like we are there with the apostles. Kind of like getting into a time machine and God is bringing it all to us all right here. This is why the Mass is so amazing. We're participating with all Catholics for all time, all the way back to the last supper. The reality the real presence is this; that not only Jesus is present but all of the mystical body is present. Heaven and earth together worshipping God. Let's take Jesus' mother Mary. She is in the communion of Saints. Let's meditate on the annunciation.

[The Angel Gabriel and Mary come forward to pantomime the scene]

Sister Angela: Gabriel the Angel tells Mary she will conceive Jesus through the Holy Spirit. Mary says yes to God. Do you know that we all have a Guardian Angel? Here is how you can pray to your Guardian Angel. Here is a booklet on your prayer to your Guardian Angel and a booklet on your Rosary prayers. Now it's time for recess.

[Sister Angeles comes forward while kids play soccer behind her. She faces the audience]

Sister Angela: Carlo was so captivated by Christ in the Eucharist and so devoted to Christ, that he received permission to receive communion a year before usual.

[Rajesh comes forward and speaks]

Rajesh: Carlo was glowing at his first communion. From then on he went to Mass every day and Adoration daily. He prayed his rosary daily and felt like his Guardian Angel was his best friend. Carlo read his Bible and studied the lives of the Saints. I was so moved by Carlo's deep faith that I became Catholic.

[At this point a new actor (Merrick) representing Carlo (older) is ready to take the stage for the next scene]

St. Francis and St. Claire - Scene 4

[Luana (Ginger Wecker) comes to the stage and says:]

Luana: I lived in Milan close to Carlo and, being his grandmother, I spent a lot of time with him. When Carlo learned how to read, he read the usual Italian children's books. But he also began to read about the Saints and the Bible, and he had great interest in visiting the places where the Saints had lived and we went to many of them. One Saint who really captured his imagination was from the 1200's, Saint Francis of Assisi. By the time Carlo was twelve we had been to Assisi many times.

[As Luana is speaking, Carlo (Merrick Edwards), age 12, comes up to stage with prop of Saint Francis in his hands.]

Carlo: Nonna I've been reading about Saint Francis again. Can we go back to Assisi?

[The Assisi mural on stage 1 is rolled over.]

Luana: And so we took a pilgrimage to Assisi.

[Luana and Carlo begin to walk down and across the way to the Assisi mural and they meet Andrea and Antonia on stage 1 near the mural of Assisi.]

Carlo: Can you believe Saint Francis and Saint Clair actually walked these streets? It's like being in heaven.

[Saint Francis and Saint Clair and Jesus walk forward from the backstage.]

Luana: Yes, and Saint Claire had a Eucharistic miracle here. Let's read about it.

St. Francis: I am Saint Francis and this is Saint Claire.

St. Claire: Francis and I were friends. We both believed strongly in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

St. Francis: Claire and the nuns, called the Poor Claires, lived at the San Damiano church.

St. Claire: One day when I was sick in bed an army attacked Assisi.

[The soundtrack of soldiers marching begins slowly and the soldiers in the back marching loudly begin to slowly process up the center aisle. The soundtrack gets gradually louder. Hearing that the soldiers were coming one of the nuns says]

Poor Claire Sister: Claire rose up from her sick bed and took the monstrance containing the Eucharist from the Chapel. Claire knew Jesus would protect us. She went to the walls and lifted the monstrance.

[The marching soldier music dies down, way down.]

Poor Claire Sister (continuing): A brilliant light shone from the monstrance and the soldiers fell back and ran away in fright.

[The Saints back away. Carlo runs back up to the stage (stage 2) and flies a kite as his parents talk to the audience. He is joined by his friends as Saint Francis looks on.]

Andrea: Carlo was really happy in Assisi. He loved it so much we bought a house there.

Antonia: Carlo felt like Saint Francis was his protector. He saw him as a role model; how he loved the Eucharist, and, like Carlo, came from a wealthy family, but devoted himself to God. He also loved animals and cared for the poor.

Luana: We came to Assisi a lot during those years when Carlo was growing up. He had fun in the countryside with his friends, flying kites and playing in the fields.

[Luana, Andrea and Antonia return to their seats in front row stage 1 and the Assisi mural is pulled back.]

[Mario (Rhys) stands up in preparation for next scene.]

Carlo's Movies and the Computer - Scene 5

[Carlo and cousins put their kites down. Carlo picks up a camera with Flavia (cousin #1), cousin #2, and cousin #3, standing nearby picking up dogs and cats. On Stage 1, Mario (Rhys) face the audience and explain the skit of movie making as the children pantomime it on stage 2.]

Mario (Rhys): Carlo liked to play with his animals. The Acutis family had four dogs, two cats and a goldfish. Carlo and his cousins made films about the animals and Carlo would edit them into movies. Each dog had its own lines with voiceovers done by Carlo.

[As Andrea and Antonia look on with the audience the children as they speak are pantomiming the dogs pitted against the cats chasing the cats then the cats chasing the dogs who would become the masters of the universe. Carlo's apartment one dog, Crumb, the pincher takes the throne and is the master and crowned king. On stage, Flavia hides Pokémon and Crumb finds it and Flavia hides it and Crumb finds it.]

Mario: Carlo spent hours making these movies with his cousins. Friends and family thought the videos were good and that Carlo would become a film director when he grew up.

Flavia: (melody) Let's play Super Mario!

[They pantomime playing Super Mario, holding PlayStation controllers.]

Mario: Carlo was raised as a normal boy. He loved playing sports. He played soccer, tennis, basketball, and he learned karate and taught himself the saxophone. He also loved to ride his bike around the neighborhood with me and our other friends.

In many ways Carlo was not so perfect but he had a strong will and with this will he improved himself. . He decided to limit his gaming time to one hour on Saturdays. He had a weakness for sweets, and he felt he talked too much. He went to weekly confession and kept a journal to chart his progress.

[Carlo approaches the microphone]looking to his family and audience

Carlo: I can't waste time. I feel like there is so much I need to do with my life. Every minute that passes is a minute less for us to serve God.

[The kids jump off the stage and Carlo sits at the table with his laptop]

Mario: Carlo developed a new passion, computer programming.

[As Mario speaks, mother brings a stack of books to Carlo and sets it down on the table.]

Mario (continuing): So, Carlo's mother bought him university level books on the subject. Starting at age 8, Carlo had learned several computer languages all by himself. He wanted to use his computer skills to spread the Catholic faith.

Mario: By the time he was a teenager Carlo had mastered programming. During his first year of high school Carlo created a website for our parish, and for our high school he created a website to promote community service.

Eucharistic Miracles – Scene 6

Antonia: When Carlo was growing up in Milan he would see people standing for hours in long lines for rock concerts waiting to get tickets. There were no lineups however in front of Milan's hundreds of Churches, and inside, there was hardly anybody there.

Carlo: Why are the churches empty? Don't people realize that Jesus is with us? There should be long lines for that.

Antonia: To inspire more excitement about the Eucharist, Carlo began to investigate eucharistic miracles.

[Carlo is now at his desk with his computer the heavenly banquet calls Saint Anthony of Padua actors come forward. As Carlo says to himself]

Carlo (speaking while typing): Eucharistic miracle, Anthony of Padua.

[A graphic of the Saint Anthony eucharistic miracle story comes on the screen behind Carlo, showing what he is seeing on his computer. Carlo then reads the story as the actors come forward and act it out. Saint Anthony comes forward first and speaks to Carlo.]

Saint Anthony: I am Saint Anthony of Padua.

Carlo: You are known as the Saint of miracles.

Anthony: Yes because of the amazing things God did.

[Carlo begins to read about Saint Anthony's life as the actors pantomime it out]

Carlo: It says here that in the 1200's you joined Saint Francis and walked through Italy spreading the good news of Jesus.

Anthony: Yes, and we came to a town where the villagers did not believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. One man said:

[As Carlo speaks Jesus comes forward]

Villager: I'll believe Jesus is really present if you show me proof.

[Carlo looks at the audience and then the villagers]

Carlo (to the audience): Everyone was sure that Anthony would lose the debate unless a miracle happened. A donkey that had not been fed for several days was led in. [Donkey is led in from the banquet table] and a large bale of hay was placed by the donkey while Saint Anthony walked towards the animal carrying the Holy Eucharist. [Jesus hands Anthony the monstrance from the banquet table.] Then amazingly, the starving donkey knelt down in front of the Holy Eucharist without paying attention to the food.

[The villagers act out looking surprised and then they kneel and pray and bow their heads and pause, staying in this position. Andrea comes forward and speaks to the audience]

Andrea: Carlo became intensely interested in the miracles of the Eucharist and wanted to tell the whole world about them. Carlo built a website that described every Eucharistic miracle that has ever happened in the history of the world. It took him the next four years.

Carlo the Catechist - Scene 7

[Carlo walks downstairs as Sister Angela says]

Sister Angela: I asked Carlo to help with catechism class because he explained the faith so well to children.

[Stage 1 children in front row pull the chairs forward and Carlo enters smiling.]

Carlo: Good morning! [Carlo shows puppets of Jesus as the Good Shepherd]

[Mural or poster of Jesus as the Good Shepherd is displayed by Sister Angela]

Carlo: Jesus is the Good Shepherd who always takes care of and protects everyone in his church.

[Carlo points to the Eucharist, the monstrance, and the Tabernacle.]

Carlo (continuing): Jesus is really here. [He points to the Tabernacle.] You can come every day to talk to Jesus and listen to him. You can receive Holy Communion. When we take Holy Communion it's Jesus himself living in you. You will bring him everywhere you go, to everyone you meet. It's a miracle! Here is the story of a miracle about Germaine. A long time ago there was a girl. She was a shepherdess.

[Carlo pantomimes the story with Sister Angela and the kids as Germaine on stage 2 comes forward and acts out and tells her story while Carlo does the puppets on the table with Sister Angela]

[Germaine comes forward from the banquet table]

Germaine: Bon jour! I am Germaine. Jesus calls me to Mass every day when I hear the church bells ring. [Church bell sounds rings] I take care of my sheep so I lay down my staff and my sheep gather around it and stay there while I go to Mass and God protects them. I carry my rosary beads and I go to Mass to be with Jesus in Holy Communion.

When I return my sheep are there. They didn't wander off and they were safe from wolves. One day the stream I usually cross to go to Mass was flooded. The village children on the opposite side of the bank yelled warnings to me to go back. Go back! It's dangerous. To their surprise, I made the sign of the cross and the waters parted, leaving a dry path for me. God made a miracle so I could go to Mass and be united with Jesus.

Carlo: Is it hard to get to mass sometimes?

[Children nod]

Sister Angela: what can we do about it?

Child #1: Make the sign of the cross.

Carlo: Yes, that's right!

Child #2: Hold your rosary beads.

Sister Angela: Yes, great idea!

Child #3: Jesus will help us.

Carlo and Sister Angela (at the same time): Yes!

Carlo: Here are some coloring book pictures of Jesus the Good Shepard and Saint Germaine to color in. See you next week. Bye.

[Jesus and Saint Germaine back up and return to the Heavenly banquet table.]

[Props: Give out pictures]

Carlo and the Homeless: Scene 8

[Carlo and the poor a homeless man comes up from the front row and sits and slumps on cardboard bed. Guardian Angel gestures toward the homeless man. Carlo and Rajesh stop and speak to him in a pantomime. Jesus comes forward from heaven and kneels down with Carlo then takes the microphone center stage 2 and says:]

Jesus: Truly I tell you, whatever you did for the least of these you did for me.

[He then backs into heaven {stage 3} where heaven's hands are in prayer and then raised up as Carlo goes upstairs.]

Carlo: Mom I need some blankets and an extra plate from our dinner. There is someone who is cold and hungry.

[Carlo and Rajesh go back and pantomime giving food and a blanket. Antonia comes forward.]

Antonia: Carlo's faith was practical. He bought sleeping bags with his own money and for many nights served a plate from our dinners to this homeless man, named Emmanuel.

[Emmanuel picks up his mat and walks off stage and goes to the back]

Antonia: One day Emmanuel was not there anymore. Carlo was heartbroken not to see him anymore.

Carlo Acutis Play – Finale Scene Nine

[Guardian Angel leads Carlo to the stage and parents stand by his side, as he takes his place on two chairs like a bed with a blanket that dad and mom put on him. They pantomime praying as Carlo goes limp and closes his eyes. Carlo's Guardian Angel and another Angel escort him home to heaven. His parents remain praying while Carlo is greeted by Jesus. They are happy to see each other. Soft music plays in the background (Heaven is Here). The Angels and Saints celebrate happily at Carlo's homecoming in Heaven. Carlo's parents hug each other as they realize he has passed away and they come downstairs as the teenagers call each other. Giovanni is the first to call Mario]

Giovanni: Carlo has died.

Mario: Oh no. We should go see his parents

[The teens from stage 2 gather around Carlo's parents who are now on stage 1 also. Each one of them tells Andrea and Antonia how Carlo helped them.]

Giovanni: I remember Carlo's smile.

Mario: Carlo invited me over to his house when I was sad.

Sophia: Carlo helped me with my homework.

Rocco: Carlo stopped kids from bullying me.

[The cast sitting in the front row comes forward to the stage. Rajesh, Beata, Emmanuel the homeless man, the Sisters, Father Ilio, Lena all on the ground level who have participated in the play come forward. One of the teens says:]

Giovanni: Let's go to Mass. Carlo said his plan was to be united to Jesus. Let's go to Mass where we can be close to Jesus and Carlo.

[The heavenly banquet moves to the front of the stage. The Eucharist is brought forward. Carlo stands with Jesus, Mary and his Guardian Angel and they begin to sing Heaven is Here (the first chorus). All those on the ground level their backs are facing the audience and they are kneeling or standing in prayer before the Eucharist, as the second chorus comes on they, on stage 1, turn and face the audience and sing Heaven is Here. They join in with the Angels and Saints and Jesus on stage 2. When the second chorus is over and the song is finished this is the end of the play.]