

Our Story





"The Vision" at the Woodyard



*For 33 Consecutive Years, the Lemond Family has celebrated a
"Mass in the Woodyard" in Barrett Station, Texas.*

*This is the story of how and why that celebration started and continues
to this day~*

On April 26, 1988, our Parents, Lawrence and Bertha Lemond, celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary in Mama's Hospital Room in Baytown, Texas. Their ten children were ecstatic that they had reached this milestone.

Mama had been fighting colon cancer since 1984 and was now in hospice care. She told Daddy to buy a diamond ring for himself because he had bought many diamonds for her over the years, and it was the perfect time to buy one of his own. Being candid about her future, she told her husband, "After I am gone, the way you think you are going to live your life won't be that way."

Mama was at total peace knowing her transition was imminent. When any of us would ask her if she wanted to be healed, she would say, "Yes, but 'Thy will be done'" Our Daddy and all ten of us children knew she was accepting God's Will for herself; whatever that may be. Mama entered eternal glory on Sunday, May 29, Trinity Sunday, the day before Memorial Day. Although we were all devastated, Daddy was most devastated and understandably so.

Our Mother's Funeral Mass was celebrated on the following Wednesday, June 1, at St Martin De Porres Church in Barrett Station, Texas; where our family had lived for over forty years. Daddy started attending First Friday Mass Devotions on the very first Friday after Mama's Funeral. Shortly thereafter, Daddy was diagnosed with prostate cancer and given six months to live. We were all devastated once again. We had just experienced our Mom's battle with cancer and could not imagine having to lose our Dad so soon after losing our Mom. Daddy sought medical assistance and continued to faithfully attend the First Friday Devotions.

On October 7th, after attending Mass, Daddy was preparing to eat a bowl of cereal at the kitchen table and accidentally spilled milk on the table. The spill dried in the shape of a diamond and Daddy immediately felt the spilled milk was a sign from Mama that she was okay. He refused to wipe off the spilled milk that had dried in the shape of a diamond, because it meant so much to him. A few days later, while visiting Virgie, his oldest daughter, he told her the story about the milk that dried in the shape of a diamond.

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He drew a picture of the diamond on paper and wrote the date of the spill as 10/7/1988. Not only was October 7 the first Friday of the month, but it was also the *Feast of the Holy Rosary*, a devotion faithfully practiced by our family.

But then a mishap occurred in November. Xavier, our second oldest brother, was at Daddy's house, but Daddy was not around then. Xavier sat at the kitchen table; puzzled at what he saw, he scratched and removed the dried milk completely off the table. The sign of confirmation that Daddy felt was from his wife was removed. He was deeply disappointed and felt alone again, still missing his wife terribly.

Something Incredible Happened on Christmas Eve

Around 8:00 p.m. on a chilly Christmas Eve night in 1988, before attending midnight mass, our Dad walked across the street from his home to his woodyard. As he was checking equipment and closing the gates at the woodyard, little did my dad realize how drastic his life and his children's lives would change by completing his daily routine.

On that night, he saw a beautiful glow of blue and white colors shining on an old, discarded white tabletop in the woodyard. He immediately felt again that this was a message that his wife, Bertha, was okay. He was so deeply moved by this never-before-seen glow, that he invited Virgie and her family, who were visiting, to come across the street to see something remarkably interesting. After midnight mass he shared the beautiful glow with Father Donald Fest, SSJ, his parish priest, Martin, his youngest son, Raphael, his fourth son, and his two sisters who lived in Barrett, May Auzenne and Eva Auzenne. Each of them saw various images in the glow. On Christmas night, Lynda, our second oldest sister, and her family also saw the glow and images on the tabletop.

On the day after Christmas, Daddy called his other children who had not yet seen the beautiful glow and asked them all to come and meet with him at his home. He told his sons Lawrence, Xavier, Jim, Gerald, and daughter Janie what had occurred that Christmas Eve. He invited them across the street and then asked, *"What do you see?"* *It was important to our Dad never to suggest or forcibly lead others to see anything. He felt that what you believed you saw was your own belief.* His children and grandchildren saw various images as had the previous family members, but Daddy never told us what he saw until after he had heard our versions first. He did mention to us that he felt this was a sign that Mama was okay. The glow on the tabletop appeared in the shape of a diamond. Inside the diamond, there was a colorful glow.

Sharing with family members lasted only a few days. News about the beautiful glow in the woodyard quickly spread. Visitors from our small Barrett Station Community came, and then visitors from nearby communities came.

By New Year' Eve, hundreds of visitors from all over outlying communities came. By January 3, 1989, the News Media came to interview Daddy, Martin, and several visitors also. Articles were published in several newspapers, including The Houston Chronicle, The Houston Post, The Baytown Sun, and the Catholic Herald. And then the floodgates were opened.

The national director of the American Gay Atheists was among the visitors and pointed out that the light was a reflection from the light of a nearby car wash. Martin and Daddy noticed that when the light from the car wash was off, the images were no longer visible. However, soon after, the images began to appear during the day, without the assistance of the light from the car wash. News spread about that too; and visitors started coming during the day as well as night, seven days a week.

At night, thousands of visitors would stand in line for over four hours each night on the major thoroughfare, FM 2100 Road, and all surrounding streets in the community. Our third sister, Janelle, lived in Nashville, Tennessee when the beautiful glow appeared. She and her family first visited the woodyard during the week after New Year's. Her friends picked them up from the airport in Houston and drove them to Barrett that night. They were shocked at what they saw in the usually quiet, small community--long lines of people standing from the north and the south side of FM 2100 to reach West Melville, the location of the woodyard. Janelle and her family had to park a mile away and walk to the woodyard. Once they approached the woodyard, they saw orderly crowds of people at the woodyard, at Daddy's house across the street, and even standing in the street.

Prayers, Rosaries being said, and Spiritual Songs being sung could be heard from the people awaiting their turns to see the beautiful glow. Some held candles or flashlights as they waited. Visitors from various parts of the world came into Barrett Station just to see the images in the woodyard. They came for varied reasons--to see the glow, to pray, to meditate, to ask for healing, or to ask for Divine Assistance. They were from all walks of life—the young, the old; the rich, the poor; clergy, non-clergy; believers in God, as well as non-believers in God. The visitors brought various mementos and laid them on the ground in front of the tabletop—candles, rosaries, religious cards, prayer cards, pictures of ill or deceased relatives and friends, statuettes, and flowers. Daddy and Martin welcomed them all.

Before the beautiful glow appeared, the woodyard was the place where Daddy and Martin conducted their daily wood business. But within days after the news circulated locally, nationally, and internationally, visitors from all over the world came to our woodyard to see what is now called *"The Vision"*. Martin and Daddy's daily business was interrupted by visitors coming at all times of the night and day to see "The Vision".

Martin said that one day he was working in the woodyard, but the next day, he was working as a Great Listener, Consoler, Encourager, a Giver of Hope. He said this was truly an on-the-job training for which he had no prior experience.

Throughout the year, visitors continued to come in small groups, pairs, or alone. Family and Community Members would recite the rosary at dusk until “The Vision” would appear in color. A Group of Parishioners from Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Crosby would come every Sunday to recite the rosary. This tradition lasted approximately five years. When time allowed, visitors talked with either Daddy or Martin about individual experiences and the reasons they felt compelled to come to the woodyard. Many wrote letters and sent greeting cards or other written messages, and sketches of images after seeing the Vision. Interestingly, a vast number of visitors shared a common connection with cancer and how cancer had affected their lives or other family and friends. The long lines continued throughout April 1989. Our Daddy and Martin were always accommodating. Their lives had dramatically changed.

Meanwhile, Daddy organized the first mass in the woodyard, which was celebrated on *Memorial Day, May 1989*, a year after Mama’s death. Father Donald Fest, SSJ, our Parish Priest, said the first mass. Family, Community Members, and anyone who knew about the mass attended. Our Daddy served barbecue while family and friends brought sides and desserts. After mass, the attendees gathered in the parish hall to enjoy the dinner provided without charge by our Daddy. Family members and volunteers helped prepare and serve the dinner. Daddy continued to organize the annual mass in the woodyard for an additional eight years.

On June 6, 1997, surrounded by family members, our Dad peacefully entered eternal life just a few days after the annual Memorial Day Mass Celebration in the woodyard. We were grateful to have our Dad for nine additional years and to share “The Vision” in the Woodyard with our family, friends, and with people from all over the world. Our family has continued to host the annual mass to this day. “The Vision” Mass is now celebrated at St. Martin De Porres due to the sweltering summer sun. After the mass, we continue to gather and enjoy a great meal, visit, and enjoy each other’s company.

****Explanatory Note: All facts stated are supported by personal photos, newspaper articles, family memoirs, and letters from visitors, which are in the family archives.**

Sources are not noted within the article but are available for viewing in the *Lemond Family Archives in Barrett Station.*

Story narrated and written by: Virgie Lemond Mouton

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