

11 September 2001, Aboard USS ENTERPRISE (CVN 65)

After having spent 6 sweltering weeks in the Persian Gulf, the USS ENTERPRISE (CVN 65) had been heading south for only a short time when word of the events back in the States reached it.

An officer called the Captain, who was on the bridge and asked him to tune in to the television news broadcast. After having done so, the skipper ordered the helmsman to come about 180 degrees.

We were soon off the coast of Pakistan.

The ship's chapel was packed that evening. An informal prayer service was held. People went around the room with different prayers. There was something I wanted to share, but the door just didn't seem to open to give me the opportunity to do so. Besides, the clock was ticking and I had to get up to the bridge for the ship's evening prayer. Too bad, it seemed so much on the mark, especially the part about the destruction of cities.

But, in fact, I was able to share with everyone two paragraphs from a book that I like to think Divine Providence had had me reading:

“What do the scars of Christ teach us? They teach us that life is a struggle: that our condition of a final resurrection is exactly the same as His; that unless there is a cross in our lives, there will never be an empty tomb; unless there is a Good Friday, there will never be an Easter Sunday; unless there is a crown of thorns, there will never be the halo of light; and unless we suffer with Him, we shall not rise with Him ...

“The scars are not only reminders that life is warfare, but they are also pledges of victory in that war. Our Blessed Lord said, ‘I have overcome the world.’ By this he means that he has overcome evil in principle. The victory is assured, only the good news has not yet leaked out. Evil will never be able to be stronger than it was on that particular day, for the worst thing that evil can do is not to ruin cities and to wage wars ... against the good and the living. The worst thing that evil can do is to kill God. Having been defeated in that, in evil’s strongest moment, when evil wore its greatest armor, it can never be victorious.” [*Fulton J. Sheen, “Seven Words of Jesus and Mary” ISBN 0-7648-0708-0, page 61*]

As I left the Big E's Chapel, the prayer group welcomed the above words with gusty applause.

Praise the Lord!

- LCDR Vincent A. Salamoni, CHC, USNR