

My name is Stephen Amato. I grew up with a very tight-knit family, with my mother, Eleanor, my father, Alfio, sister, Lorraine, and brother, Michael. In order to provide for us, both my Dad and Mom worked two jobs daily. My father would first attend Epiphany of our Lord Church before heading to work as a tailor and, in the evening, he sold suits at Robert Hall. My Mom, who worked for an eye doctor, would work from 9 am to 2 pm, then come home and make dinner, then go back to work 6-9 pm. They each kept this schedule so that their children could attend Catholic schools.

Things changed greatly in 1979, as Dad was diagnosed with cancer and passed away the same year, just before my sister Lorraine gave birth to his first grandchild. It was at that time I stopped going to church, because my best friend and mentor was taken from me.

From that point on, I walked away from the church. Even when I was married in Sept. 1990, it was not in a Catholic Church. But my focus was beginning my life with my wife Donna. In June of 1999, Donna and I took a trip to Florida. It was going to be our last big trip before beginning a family.

On our first day home, I came down with a high fever. My boss at the time told me I must come in to work because my co-manager was on vacation. He threatened me saying, if I did not come in, I would not have a job. I do not remember driving home that day from Northeast Philadelphia to South Jersey on I-95. I was taken to Underwood Hospital where I was put on a ventilator and cooling blankets. I was transferred the next day to the University of Pennsylvania Hospital, where I was diagnosed with viral encephalitis and put into an induced coma. I found out it was from mosquito bites during our Florida Vacation.

Two months later, I was released to Magee Rehabilitation Center where I re-learned to walk, talk and feed myself. I came home from Magee a month later and continued out patient rehab.

In 2009 a very good friend of mine, Ed Varani, asked that I give prayer a chance. He gave me a medal of Sister Camilla. When I began to pray with the medal, I immediately noticed an unbelievable feeling with chills running up and down my spine. It was something I have never experienced before, this is not an every day occurrence.

My seizures were cut significantly from 2-4 per day to 1-2 a week. There is no doubt in my mind that Sister Battista was helping me after thinking back to my past and how my dad was taken from us.

I knew Sister Battista began working on lowering my seizures. Never before was there energy inside my body like this. I phoned Ed immediately and explained to him what had just happened. It was an extremely emotional time for the two of us, tears were running down my face.

On September 23 I came into a very bad seizure. This time, I started praying twice a day and the power I felt was unreal. It was her presence. I must say, after breaking away from Mass and then return praying to Sister (now Saint) Battista. My feelings during the seizures are different and have changed.