

SEPTEMBER 29

Unpredictability

Have you ever noticed how unpredictable God is? God does things in ways we couldn't—and wouldn't—predict in a million years. Take the way most species propagate. If we were devising a method, it's a sure bet we wouldn't have chosen the means God selected. Or take the way God decided to redeem the world. The crucifixion of God's only son would never have entered our minds. Or take Mary's appearances. If we were choosing people for Mary to appear to, we wouldn't put poor, uneducated children high on the list. (Let's be honest: we wouldn't put them on the list at all!)

One aspect of God's unpredictability that we've all experienced lies in divine responses to petitionary prayer. Prayers are seldom answered the way we think they should be. We may pray that our child makes the varsity basketball team, for example, yet she plays more poorly than ever at tryouts and fails to make even the junior varsity team. Does that mean God didn't answer our prayer? Does it mean God *did* answer, but with a resounding no? Or is there another possibility?

When prayers aren't answered the way we think they should be, we need to remember three things. First, God is unpredictable. Second, God doesn't say no without reason. Third, God may have (indeed, probably has!) answered in a way we never expected. As Helen Keller said, “[W]e look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one that has opened for us.”

*Am I prepared for the unpredictable when I pray?
Am I willing to accept God's answer, no matter what it is?*

I EXPECT AN ANSWER FROM GOD, BUT I DON'T
DEMAND A SPECIFIC ANSWER.