



## The Miracle of the Carpenter

Loretto Chapel took five years to complete. Modeled after the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris, its delicate sanctuary contains an altar, a rose window, and a choir loft.

The choir loft is the reason for wonder.

Were you to stand in the newly built chapel in 1878, you might see the Sisters of Loretto looking forlornly at the balcony. Everything else was complete: the doors had been hung, the pews had been placed, the floor had been laid. Every-

thing was finished. Even the choir loft. Except for one thing. No stairs.

The chapel was too small to accommodate a conventional stairway. The best builders and designers in the region shook their heads when consulted. "Impossible," they murmured. There simply wasn't enough room. A ladder would serve the purpose, but mar the ambience.

The Sisters of Loretto, whose determination had led them from Kentucky

to Santa Fe, now faced a challenge greater than their journey: a stairway that couldn't be built.

What they had dreamed of and what they could do were separated by fifteen impossible feet.

So what did they do? The only thing they could do. They ascended the mountain. Not the high mountains near Santa Fe. No, they climbed even higher. They climbed the same mountain that Jesus climbed 1,800 years earlier in Bethsaida. They climbed the mountain of prayer.

As the story goes, the nuns prayed for nine days. On the last day of the novena, a Mexican carpenter with a beard and a wind-burned face appeared at the convent. He explained that

he had heard they needed a stairway to a chapel loft. He thought he could help.

The mother superior had nothing to lose, so she gave him permission.

He went to work with crude tools, painstaking patience, and uncanny skill. For eight months he worked.

One morning the Sisters of Loretto entered the chapel to find their prayers had been answered. A masterpiece of carpentry spiraled from the floor to the loft. Two complete three-hundred-sixty-degree turns. Thirty-three steps held together with wooden pegs and no central support. The wood is said to be a variety of hard fir, one nonexistent in New Mexico!

When the sisters turned

to thank the craftsman, he was gone. He was never seen again. He never asked for money. He never asked for praise. He was a simple carpenter who did what no one else could do so singers could enter a choir loft and sing.

See the stairway for yourself, if you like. Journey into the land of Enchantment. Step into this chapel of amazement and witness the fruit of prayer.

Or, if you prefer, talk to the Master Carpenter yourself. He has already performed one impossible feat in your world. He, like the Santa Fe carpenter, built a stairway no one else could build. He, like the nameless craftsman, used material from another place. He, like the visitor to Loretto,

came to span the gap between where you are and where you long to be.

Each year of his life is a step. Thirty-three paces. Each step of the stair is an answered prayer. He built it so you can climb it.

And sing. From *In the Eye of the Storm*. Copyright (Thomas Nelson, 1997) Max Lucado.

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## Hyde-Smith reports additional \$3.98 million for opioid treatments in state

U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-Miss.) announced on Friday, March 22, that Mississippi has been awarded an additional \$3.98 million to increase access to opioid treatments.

The state will use the grant, funded through the State Opioid Response (SOR) Grant program, to treat opioid addiction and to reduce unmet treatment needs.

"This funding will allow Mississippi to continue responding to this pervasive problem, which affects too many Mississippians. I especially appreciate that this grant will help expand the availability of treatments to areas that don't have easy access to this care," Hyde-Smith said.

Treatments would include access to medication-assist-

ed treatment using the three Food and Drug Administration-approved medications for the treatment of opioid use disorder, reducing unmet treatment need, and reducing opioid overdose related deaths. Services would include additional prevention and recovery activities for opioid use disorder.

The federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration administers the State Opioid Response Grant program, which is part of a strategic opioid response initiative supported by President Trump and funded through congressional appropriations.

Mississippi was awarded \$11.5 million in FY2018 in opioid funding through the U.S. Department of Health

and Human Services (HHS).

Congress increased FY2019 appropriations for SAMHSA to combat the opioid epidemic and reduce opioid-related deaths nationwide.



The West Civic Club met this past week, with 12 members present. The hostesses for this month were Lynn Hathcock, Meredith Fancier and Carol Black.

After prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance, Ms. Lynn Hathcock thanked Susanne Bowie, Carol Black, Maryann Stevens and Sammy Aldridge for all the efforts that went into getting the meeting room prepared

Hyde-Smith serves on the Senate appropriations subcommittee responsible for funding HHS and its efforts to aid state, local, and tribal governments in fighting the opioid epidemic.

for the family gathering after the funeral services of Mr. Horace Bouchillon. Then Ms. Jean Aldridge introduced the guest speaker, Ms. Carla Stringer from McComb, MS. Carla and her family have traveled extensively, with the family plus taking different groups to see plays, musicals and informative events for children as well as adults. Carla has won yard of the season from the city of McComb. She is a member of the Jr. Auxiliary and is a member of the National Garden Club Board. Triple Crown Bees is also one of her enjoyments. Ms. Carla had the club members assemble a bee watering station from terra-cotta dishes, small rocks and also various sizes of colored stones. Bees are very necessary around a lawn, garden or orchard. The meeting then resumed with the reading of the minutes and treasurer's report. Following the reading and approval of the minutes and reports, the club members discussed the upcoming West school Reunion, which is to be held the first Saturday of May. Anyone who has gone to school in West is asked to join their fellow members for a day of good eats and visiting. More information on this in the upcoming report. You must have your applications and reservations in by the 27th of April. There was also an update on acquiring the old East Holmes Academy monument. The Collect was then read and the meeting was dismissed.

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**DEADLINE TO SUBMIT ALL CONTENT FOR ADS IS FRIDAY BY 5 P.M. FOR THE FOLLOWING WEEK'S PAPER.**