

CAN MIRACULOUS HEALING HAPPEN AT A DISTANCE?  
CAN IT HAPPEN THROUGH PRAYERS? THROUGH THE  
PRAYERS OF SOMEONE YOU HAVE NEVER MET –  
SOMEONE WHOSE FAITH YOU DON'T EVEN SHARE?

# THE IMPOSSIBLE CONNECTION

## BERNARD ELLIS

London businessman, Bernard Ellis, suffered clinical depression for eight years. He was nearly bankrupt, addicted to anti-depressants and alcohol, suffering panic attacks and suicidal impulses.

On 24 August 1988, during a last desperate business trip to Malaysia, Ellis felt startlingly better. He thought it must be the weather but his depression stayed away.

He later learned that on the same day a man he had never met had prayed for him in Northern Ireland. Coincidence? ROCHELLE M. GIBLER met Bernard Ellis and the man who prayed for a stranger, Father Peter Rookey.

Did they have it all? Anyone looking at Bernard and Sue Ellis in the high-living Eighties might well have thought so. They lived with their five children in a palatial house with swimming pool and stables set in 15 acres of rural Surrey, England. Staff looked after the house, grounds and horses so the family had time to ride with the Old Surrey and Burstow hunt.

But what few could see was that Bernard Ellis had slipped into clinical depression. The family business was on its last legs.

"Sue and I thought we were happy because we were earning lots of money and living in a big house," Bernard Ellis said as we sat stalled in London traffic surrounded by a tottering stacks of

books. With us in the converted van was the stranger who once prayed for Ellis. We were taking Father Peter Rookey to a healing service in London.

These days Bernard Ellis spends a month to six weeks a year, booking Father Rookey's appointments in the UK and sometimes telling his own story at the healing services. The two old friends make a striking pair – the younger Ellis in beautifully tailored pinstripes, highly polished wing-tip shoes, the more exuberant Peter Rookey in his accustomed black habit (along with his summer habit, it makes up his whole wardrobe) and sandals. The books are the ones Bernard Ellis plans to sell at the service. But this is getting ahead of the story.

"When we got married in 1967 – Sue is Catholic and I am Jewish – I never changed my religion because we were in love and it didn't seem to matter that we were different religions," Bernard Ellis said. "Then 16 years later Sue had a conversion experience and tried to persuade me but I never listened to her.

"I have been an importer and exporter since I was 16 and our company, Anglo-World Steel Exports Ltd, was having great success buying and selling stainless steel. But the more money we earned, the more I relied on things. I became disappointed and disillusioned and ill with really bad depression. I used to take Atavan, an anti-depressant, and washed it down with large quantities of brandy. After a while the Atavan didn't work so I would take more and more. I was gulping pills down and swigging more brandy straight from the bottle. So I was