

# GOD WITH US STORY 54: RACHAEL BEDE | "Our Song of Bernadette" | + SPECIAL Matt Fradd & Ralph Martin RADIO EPISODE

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God with us  
Our  
**SUNG**  
of  
**BERNADETTE**

# OUR SONG OF BERNADETTE

By Rachael Bede

**Bernadette (and her twin, Genevieve) were born 7 weeks early, and immediately Bernadette showed signs of struggling health. We were told she had pneumonia on day 2. The following day, as Philip and I were toasting each other in the hospital where I was recovering from my c-section, medical staff burst into the room to tell us they had detected a heart malformation that would require surgery as soon as she could gain enough weight to hit 4 lbs.**

**As I think back to the time following that, Bernadette transferred to the children's hospital. Philip and I had to visit our twins at two different hospitals for the three weeks until Genevieve was released. Then we had to find people to hold Genevieve so we could each spend precious time with Bernadette who remained in an incubator, saving her energy so she could gain weight.**

**I don't remember a fear response. I remember the significance of the**

name that God gave to us for her. In German, Bernadette means "brave as a bear." In French, it is the name of a small Saint with health problems who humbly spread the message of the "beautiful lady" (Mary) who bade her dig a well which then filled with water to which countless miracles have been attributed.

**I remember peace.** When I embraced her and smelled her softly tufted dark head. When I wondered about her disproportionately loud voice. When she and Genevieve were baptized in the hospital by a wise and holy elderly "grandfather priest" preceding her surgery. And even when we received a call in the night that she had stopped breathing and needed to be resuscitated. Momentary terror, but then a pervasive sweetness. A glow and a warmth that surrounded those days and moments. A gratefulness for her life.

**Our first moments with our twins were steeped in prayer.** Each of us experienced the kind of solitude that comes from being still with God in the quiet of the rocking chairs punctuated by the rhythmic beeping of machines near the incubators of our daughters, when all we could do was worship and trust. We were being sustained spiritually as Bernadette was physically.

**When Bernadette was a toddler,** doctors detected that she had been bleeding internally. One night she began spitting up blood clots all over her red footie pajamas. Over and over. I ran her to the car and buckled her in, praying and praying as I sped toward the hospital. I sang her a lullaby, trying to not allow my voice to waver, knowing that it could be the last voice, the last song she would hear in her earthly life.

**During the following years,** there have been many opportunities to tumble into a valley of fear. There have been moments of sheer distress. Tidal waves of it. But always, the Word. A physical presence. Nothing akin to false hope or clinging to some Hallmark-card version of how we ought to feel. But the deepness and softness and warmth of the real Word- sustaining us, pulling us up, filling us with everything we need in each moment.

**We may not have seen direct,** miraculous healing as a result of our prayers and those of so many who have taken our Bernadette to heart, but she has been sustained and she is a 16-year-old who loves God with her whole heart- imperfect, but always seeking to grow in holiness and to place herself in His presence. As for Philip and me, we have a sense that regardless of outcomes, good or ill, we will be fine. We are ever in God's mercy and are

learning to accept each victory and struggle in this life as His will for us and not something to battle.

**The following song**, which was sung over her by her grandfather when he would visit her in the hospital, has become an anthem for us, and was sung in prayer this past summer in a church filled with friends and family who had come to silently adore Our Lord and intercede for Philip, who would be donating a lobe of his liver and for Bernadette, who would be receiving it through a liver transplant to save her life.

O God behind all praising, We worship you today  
and sing the love amazing that songs cannot repay  
For we can only wonder at every gift you send,  
at blessings without number and mercies without end:  
We lift our hearts before you and wait upon your word,  
We honor and adore you, our great and mighty Lord

Then hear, O gracious Savior, accept the love we bring  
that we who know your favor may serve you as our King  
And whether our tomorrows be filled with good or ill,  
we'll triumph through our sorrows and rise to bless you still:  
To marvel at your beauty and glory in your ways,  
and make a joyful duty our sacrifice of praise.

**By the way**, the prayer, the worship, the transplant- it did save her life. Philip is now well and recovered. But the greater, more priceless gift we have received has been to grow in the spirit of worship, of trust, of rising to bless Him and marvel at his beauty day in and day out.

**"Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him,  
my Savior and my God."**

Psalm 42:5



## **PHILIP & RACHAEL BEDE**

have been married nearly 18 years and are parishioners of St. Patrick of Columbus, Ohio. Phil is an automotive engineer at Honda. Rachael is a stay-at-home wife and mother.



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Thank you in advance!

So blessed to be united in building the Kingdom,



**Greg and Stephanie Schlueter**

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