

The power of prayer during our baby's difficult delivery

When my wife was in the hospital delivering our first child, we had quite a scare. Things had been progressing very slowly for about 20 hours and it was now around 3:00 a.m. She was by this time totally exhausted from the contractions and had been given some drugs to help her relax. She was so tired, in fact, that she conked out instantly from the medication. At that point, the nurses needed to leave the room and told me to keep watch over her and the fetal monitor by her side, particularly the number reporting the baby's heartbeat. As I sat there, a first-time dad and a nervous wreck, I watched as suddenly the baby's heartbeat dropped from 140 beats per minute down to 120 and then, before I knew it, plummeted to around 80 beats per minute.

I called for the nurses to come back and several came rushing in. They were quite alarmed and began preparing my wife, who was still unconscious, for an emergency c-section. I was just about in a panic at this point when our doctor suddenly arrived. The nurses briefed her on what was happening and the doctor decided to examine my wife quickly before proceeding to the operating room for the c-section. The doctor reported that the umbilical cord was around the baby's neck and she tried unsuccessfully to get it free. At that point I was beside myself with panic when the doctor's expression suddenly changed—she seemed surprised—and she announced that the cord was now clear. She looked at my wife, who had been slowly waking up, and said to her calmly, "Okay, it's time to get this baby out."

My wife delivered a healthy baby boy and of course we were grateful to God for seeing us through the difficulties of the delivery and the despair that threatened to overwhelm us. We were completely amazed, however, when my wife called her mother, who lived two states away at that time, to tell her of our son's birth. My wife's mother, a devout Catholic, told us that she had woken up suddenly around 3:00 a.m. that very morning and had a very strong sensation that we were in serious trouble and needed help. Right then and there she prayed several rosaries on our behalf. Not only were we totally stunned by this news but we were very confirmed in our belief in the power of prayer and of the Spirit working in the life of our family.