

BERNARD

By Cindy Taft

There was once a little dove named Bernard. He was the youngest and smallest member of God's heavenly flock of messenger doves. Day after day, Bernard practiced flying as far and as fast as he could. He wanted to be ready when the call came to deliver his first important message from God. What would he be asked to do? Maybe he would deliver a miracle! The waiting was the hardest part, but Bernard patiently waited for his turn.

One day, while Bernard was soaring on a gentle breeze, God called to him.

"Bernard, I have a mission for you."

"I am ready," replied Bernard, his little heart beating fast with his excitement. God spoke in a very calm and gentle voice.

"Bernard, there is a young boy on Earth named Thomas who needs your help. I want you to stay close to him and do whatever you feel needs to be done. Can you do this for me?"

"Yes, I will do my best," Bernard stated with confidence.

"I know you will," God replied. "I have faith in you, my little one."

Bernard immediately set out, his snow white wings beating rapidly. After flying only a short distance, he came to a small town. His instincts lead him to a cute little house. Flowers were growing everywhere. A fragrant yellow rose was climbing up a trellis on one side. Bernard carefully chose a branch free of thorns to land on close to an open window. He quietly looked through the screen. A small boy was sitting in a wheelchair next to a bed covered with comic books. The rest of the room was clean and tidy. Thomas' nose was buried in a super hero magazine when he heard a small sound coming from his window. Bernard was cooing very softly. Thomas slowly wheeled himself over to get a closer look.

"Hello little friend," Thomas replied. "Have you come to keep me company?"

Bernard poked gently at the screen with his beak. Here was someone who needed him.

Later that day, Thomas' mom wheeled him out on the back porch where he threw some bread crusts on the sidewalk for Bernard to eat.

Time went by. Everyday was the same routine – Bernard patiently sitting on the rose bush, keeping watch over Thomas, followed with bread crumbs in the afternoon. Bernard wondered, "Am I making a difference in the life of this little boy? I have done nothing great or wonderful since I got

here?” But despite his questions, Bernard continued his constant watch over his little companion.

Several weeks later, on a lovely summer morning, Thomas’ dad wheeled him out the front door making funny race car sounds as he pushed Thomas down the ramp. Thomas’ mom followed carrying a picnic basket. Turning right, they headed down the street toward the playground. Bernard noticed a beautiful green kite tied to one of the handles on the wheelchair. As they got closer to the park, Bernard saw lots of kites dancing in the air. As soon as they were close enough and away from trees, Thomas’ dad untied the kite and took off running. Soon, Thomas’ kite was waltzing with all the other kites high among the clouds.

“How’s that?” Thomas’ dad asked as he handed the string to Thomas.

“Great! Thanks Dad.”

Thomas was content to sit and watch the rainbow of colors that filled the sky, while his mom and dad laid out the picnic feast. Bernard sat nearby on a willow branch watching the gentle wind push the kites up, down and around. Suddenly, a swift gust of wind ripped the kite string out of Thomas’ hand. His kite drifted off higher and higher into the open sky. Bernard took off, flying as fast as his little wings could take him, keeping the kite string in sight. Finally, Bernard was able to grab the string. As he turned to fly back to Thomas, he saw a miracle. The miracle was Thomas, standing in front of his wheelchair. Slowly, Thomas placed one foot in front of the other, stumbling only once as he made his way toward Bernard. Bernard gently flew down to Thomas and placed the kite string into his waiting hand. Thomas’ mom and dad ran to him, crying with joy as they hugged their little boy. Bernard now knew why God had sent him here. Being with Thomas and faithfully staying by his side, the little dove’s love had given Thomas the courage and strength he needed to make his own miracle. Happiness filled Bernard’s heart as he once again soared into the air to fly among the angels and wait for another mission from God.
