



## News Journal Staff Spotlight on an IHOP Prayer Warrior Summer 2006

By Kris M. DeCanio *June 2011 marked me being here in Kansas City for 9 years!*

Go into the IHOP prayer room just about any day of the week and look to the front right corner of the prayer room. You will see a joyful, white-haired, rosy-cheeked prayer warrior – one of our “Annas.” Her name is Debra-Louise Cossu and she practically lives at IHOP, most days getting there at 6 a.m., and not leaving until 6 p.m. *Now I go in usually 2am-2am, still about 12 hours most days...definitely on Tuesday and Thursday, my ‘sacred trusted days in the prayer room. I have moved to the back table, still on the right side when you walk into the prayer room. I hope one day soon, YOU will be tapping me on the shoulder!*

“I am here because I have always had a heart to be in the presence of the Lord,” she says. “I love to pray for people. I have a history of doing it for years. I know this is what I was created to do. It is not hard for me. I stay as long as my body can hold out. If I wake up early, I come in because I’m used to being in the presence of the Lord.”

The native Virginian has three grown children and twin grandbabies. She moved here in **June 2002** and quickly became a fixture at IHOP – one of those nameless, faceless people that make up the Missions Base, who serve where needed and love doing what they do. She spends her days splitting her time between being in the prayer room having her personal Bible study and devotions, interceding and worshiping, being in the Bethany room soaking those who are critically or chronically ill, or cleaning parts of the building as her administration duty to help IHOP run on a daily basis. She also helps manage the prayer request basket in the prayer room and prays through those requests. And if that wasn’t enough, she’s on the Cyrus Partners prayer team, praying for those partners on a regular basis. *I am now the Critical-Chronic Care Manager, teach Encountering Christ Within every week and leading small groups of Forerunner Partnership Development in my home!*

But Debbie, as her friends call her, doesn’t see this as something that is hard to do. “I’m pouring out my life as if I’ll be here forever,” she explains. “Because, again, it is just so easy to come and hours just fly by. All my time here is full. I’m never bored. In fact, I feel that I don’t have enough time here.”

Like most people at IHOP, she has a unique and fascinating story about how she got here. After first hearing about the vision for IHOP at a 1990 conference with Mike Bickle and John Wimber, she felt that the Lord was inviting her to come to Kansas City for the Passion for Jesus conference later that year. While in Kansas City, she went to church and met Bob Jones. He promptly sat down beside her and asked what she had to tell him. “I’m thinking, ‘What do I have to tell you? You’re the prophet, you tell me.’” So Debbie shared with him about a vision her two boys, then about eight and nine, had just before she came to the conference. In the vision, the boys saw a stage with young people on it. As she shared with Bob, she says tears starting coming down his face, and he told her that God had said He was going to release the “stadium” (filling the stadiums with worshippers of Jesus) vision to this generation.

Bob then told her to go to the Harry Truman Farm Home because God wanted to speak to her there. While there, she felt the Lord tell her Kansas City would be the place that she and her children and her baby brother Tony would live.

Debbie returned to Virginia, put her house up for sale and told her brother he was moving to Missouri. Her brother, who is unsaved, thought she was nuts! But a few years later, a woman from Independence, MO came to Virginia, and Tony fell in love with her, and he was the first one to move to Missouri!

Debbie’s house did not sell, and as time went on, she forgot about the Lord’s word. But the Lord had not forgotten.

In December of 2001, while she was in church, an aneurysm burst in her brain – right in the service. “So of course, they stopped the service and took me to the hospital,” she says. “The doctors went inside my head to look at the damaged site, and I had been miraculously healed. They kept me in the hospital for a week because they thought I was going to die!” This was certainly not what they were accustomed to seeing every day!

When she got out of the hospital, a young lady she had been mentoring in prayer asked her to go to Kansas City for a conference on prayer. Debbie went, and remembered God's word for her life. "I came out here and the Lord said, 'Now is the time.'"

She went back to Virginia and told the man renting her garage that he would have to find another place for his workshop because she was planning to sell her home. "He said, 'Oh, I'll buy it.' So I didn't even have to put up a for sale sign!" Debbie rejoiced.

Debbie moved to Kansas City, and her daughter and oldest son have joined her. "It seems like my whole life has prepared me to come and be here. I don't want to be anywhere else." *My daughter is now married, and I have TWIN grandchildren also living here, Phoenix and Valerie! God is so good.*

Even though she primarily wants to be an intercessor, Debbie also has desires to impart what she has to others. "You get so full of being in the presence of God that you have to pour out. I want to continue to pour out what He has given me. I'm so full of His love. I have to take what He pours in and share it with everyone who will listen."

She has just completed a book about how to move from having a life of intercession to having a life of intimacy, out of which comes intercession. The working title of the book is *Longing for You*. Although the book involves intercession, Debbie says she had no desire to write a book primarily about that. "This book is about intimacy with the One who loves you more than anyone else is able. Learning to pray is not about developing a skill or following a program but rather discovering a Person. His name is Jesus." *My book is now also published in Spanish and Korean!*

To illustrate the steps needed to move into intimate intercession, Debbie uses the analogy of a bride being carried across the threshold by her groom. "The first scene is the Groom with delight, swooping up the bride into His arms. This romance really is all about Him. Here you will learn who He is according to Scripture. As false realities are dismantled, the perceptions of man that developed outside of love will be removed, and you will experience a love never known before."

The second scene is the groom carrying the bride across the threshold. "In this stage of the journey, you are the focus. This romance really is all about you. He has set His gaze upon you, and He wants you to see yourself as He does. He looks through lenses of love alone. Learning who you really are brings clarity and new purpose as the days unfold. It must involve deliberate times of communion in His presence."

The third scene is the groom placing the bride back on her feet to stand with him. "He sets her down where she belongs, to do what she was created to do. This is where the fruit of love blossoms as together you go forth to take the love that is shared into the world. This romance really is about all mankind. As you become truly dependent upon Him, the freedom to stand in life, and in love, will change you forever. The desire for all to know Him will consume you like a living river of fire, and you will want to go out and tell the world about His love."

Debbie is finished writing the book, but is still awaiting publishing.

In the future, Debbie still sees herself in the prayer room doing what she is doing now – sitting in His presence and interceding for others, the situations around her, and the world. "I want to carry the message of intimacy out of these doors, but I mainly want to be in the prayer room. Every decade my heart's cry has been to really know Him and learn to pray. As I look back over the years, I see this is being answered, yet I still long for so much more. I really want to see His Kingdom come on earth and help to prepare others to look for and hasten that day as well. Although I still long for the same thing, it is not that I am not seeing an answer to my heart's cry. I just know there is so much more. I think by continuing to pursue this life of prayer and fasting, as prayer and fasting increase in my lifestyle, I will see His Kingdom come. One specific area is in the realm of healing. I simply believe the Bible - Jesus wants to heal us as well as save us from hell. I want to see victory over cancer every time I pray. I want to see the dead raised to life. I believe one day it will happen, and until then I will pray in faith for the healing anointing to flow from every believer as a testimony of the Church walking in purity."

*This is a wonderful life!*