

Synopsis of Story **A Letter to God**, by Gregorio López y Fuentes (1940)

Lencho is a poor Mexican farmer whose crop of corn and beans is in desperate need of rain. He and his family are delighted when rain finally comes, but to his horror, the rain changes to enormous hailstones which completely destroy his crops. Lencho and his family are facing hunger and perhaps starvation, and they realize that their only hope is God's help. That night Lencho writes a letter to God: "God, if you don't help me, I and my whole family will go hungry this year. I need a hundred pesos to plant again and to live on while the new harvest comes in, because the hail..." He addresses the letter simply "To God" and goes to the village post office to buy a stamp and mail his letter.

A post office employee notices the letter, laughs at the address - **To God** - and takes it to the Postmaster who also laughs, but then becomes thoughtful and exclaims: "Faith! I wish I had the faith of the man who wrote this letter! I wish I could believe as he believes! I wish I could be so confident in God!" So the Postmaster decides that the undeliverable letter should be answered so as not to disillusion the writer. When he opens the letter, however, he sees that more than good will is needed for the answer. So he takes up a collection from post office employees and his friends, and manages to collect sixty pesos. He puts the money into an envelope with a note that just says, "God," and mails it to Lencho.

Lencho goes to the post office the next Sunday to ask if a letter has arrived for him. The employee and the Postmaster are both watching for Lencho's reaction to the envelope containing sixty pesos. Lencho doesn't show the least surprise when he opens his letter - he is so confident in God's help - but he becomes angry when he counts the money. He can't believe that God has made a mistake or denied Lencho's request! He asks for paper and a pen, and immediately starts writing another letter. He seals it in an envelope, buys a stamp for it, and pushes it into the mail slot. As soon as the letter falls into the mail box, the Postmaster rushes to open it. The letter says:

"God: Of the money I asked you for, only sixty pesos reached me. Send me the rest, since I really need it - but don't send it through the post office because the people who work there are a bunch of thieves. - Lencho."

