

## *From the Pastor's Desk*

At long last I am able to write to you following a terrible bout with recurring pneumonias, the last set of which was back to back at end of the Season of Lent and lasting through the fourth week of the Easter Season. During that time, I spent collectively 21 days in the hospital, the second stay being one of the worst that I have ever experienced with regard to both nursing care and treatment by other hospital personnel. I am thankful to God that I was able to recover in the hospital through the daily support and presence of my dear friend of 25+ years, Cathy Fuska; however, as a matter of justice, I felt that I was not treated with the dignity that I deserved on the part of hospital personnel. Again, I am most grateful to God that I am currently recovering thanks to the help of my regular support system (and to be honest, I tried to offer up my suffering for those who suffer from the wartime activities in Iran). To be even more honest, I should not be complaining at all because there are billions of people in the world who are suffering from much more adverse circumstances than I must endure because of my illnesses and their complications. I ask that you remember all who suffer greatly for any reason as part of your regular prayer life. The more I follow this advice, the more I can put things in their proper perspective.

All that being said, I thought that it would be appropriate to give you a brief overview of my current medical condition. As you know, for me the current calendar year has been marked by four serious bouts (at least one life threatening) with pneumonia. These four incidents have impacted me greatly: physically, emotionally, spiritual, and financially. I am constantly in a great deal of pain, and I am about to undergo some serious physical therapy, for I am certain that you may have noticed, due to lack of therapy in the hospital my muscles have atrophied, and I have a bit of trouble walking. I am also on two new medications that are very expensive and not covered by insurance. I am seeing nearly a dozen physicians for various ailments and complications related to the pneumonia and I have a number of upcoming tests to attempt to certify the possible cause of these maladies that recur far

too frequently (that is in addition to my lowered resistance because of the drug cyclosporine that is my main anti-rejection medication with regard to my liver transplant {which is doing just perfectly incidentally}).

With regard to cyclosporine, there are many other detrimental side effects that accompany the use of this medication. One of them is that it adversely affects the kidneys (I have told you previously that I am retaining approximately 25/30 lbs of fluid due to my poorly functioning kidneys). **At this time, after much prayer, I feel that it is appropriate to inform all of you that my kidneys have become so bad that I require a kidney transplant.** At present I am inactive on the list because of the problem with aspiration pneumonia which precludes the possibility of having the transplant because if it is not resolved, the result could be a VERY severe form of pneumonia which coupled with the low resistance and other complications could result in very serious (if not fatal) consequences. Thanks be to God even though my current kidney function is somewhere near the 20% range, I continue to be able to diuresis on my own. With the grace of God, hopefully I will be able to continue along these lines until I am cleared for transplant and a kidney becomes available (which should not be a problem since I will be at the top of the list and I have many biological factors that place me in an elevated place for a match).

What I need from you at this time is support...as much as you can give me. The support that you extended at the time of my liver transplant helped me to make it through one of the most difficult times of my life, physically, emotionally, spiritually and fiscally. Your prayers were the most helpful, for I think they gave me the wherewithal to continue to work toward my own recovery, all the while fueled by God's grace. I will not only survive this, but also, and more importantly I will once again thrive in good health, joy, peace, and my ability to serve you. So, I am following the Lord's advice from Last Sunday's gospel, having faith in God, and also in my Lord, savior, brother and friend, Jesus Christ, who never leaves my side and loves me more than I will ever come to understand on this side of eternity. I know that I can count

on you and your support which itself adds to my patient endurance in this time of waiting and healing.

Now for an update on the parish. We are holding our own even though our school building remains empty. I have to admit that there was a possibility of renting to the diocesan catholic school system (Bishop McCort "Catholic" Academy); however, that fell through for some reason that remains a mystery given the excellent state of our school facilities (a walk in ready elementary site). There is still some interest that we are pursuing on another front; however, with summer fast approaching, some delays are to be expected. I ask that you continue to pray that our beautiful school building becomes reoccupied soon.

For the meantime, our extraordinary fundraising continues to go relatively well. You can see that both our fish fry and basket party were notably successful (albeit the former was a little less successful than last year due to the economy and rise in costs). Also, our gas ticket raffle was incredibly successful, having sold all 1000 tickets and with a parishioner as the lucky winner. We will be repeating this raffle within the coming months, which should be successful again seeing that unfortunately a reduction in gas prices does not seem to be coming any time soon. On June 6<sup>th</sup>, we will also be hosting our first Music Bingo which we hope to be a huge success. Your support is key to this endeavor. First, we are in need of donations for the event (e.g., tickets for the lottery frame/tree, etc.). Second, your patronage of the event would be MOST helpful. I have heard people say they do not want to come because they have very limited knowledge of music. Never fear, you need only have the ability to read, for the songs that are called are named for all to see. We are also serving a delicious meal of chicken cordon blue, mashed potatoes, green beans, and cake for dessert. I trust that you won't be disappointed by the event, so please, if you are able come out to join us. Also, do not forget that the ethnic fest will be fast approaching at the end of August. Your support of this event is always appreciated.

Finally, with regard to our finances, I ask that you continue to bring your regular charitable giving to prayer, for we, like all other organizations, experience the effects of inflation in terms of our steady stream of bills that need to be paid. From energy costs to office supplies, employee salaries, and basic household items, the parish is affected just as much as any household. Your cheerful giving helps us to meet our needs; however, as you know from our fundraising activities, charitable giving is never enough. So, if you give what the Lord inspires you to give, even if the only gift you can give is prayer, I truly thank you for being people of integrity.

I would be remiss today if I did give most honorable mention to the great women in our lives who have embraced the vocation of motherhood. Every time I think deeply and theologically about motherhood, I call to mind the reading from Proverbs 31:15, 25 -28:

**She rises while it is still night and provides food for her household and tasks for her female servants.**

**Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come.**

**She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.**

**She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.**

**Her children rise up and call her happy; her husband, too, and he praises her: "Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all."**

I believe that this portrait of a virtuous mother is more relevant and important today than ever. She is portrayed as strong, wise, pious, and generous. She is not perfect; however, she loves deeply and faithfully. A faithful mother is merciful, patient, and resilient much like the paradigm of motherhood, our patroness, the Blessed Virgin Mary. So, to who all who have taken up that role with dignity and humility, Happy and Blessed Mother's Day. Saints Anne, Monica, and St. Gianna Beretta Molla, patron saints of mothers, pray for our mothers today and always.