

March 23,2021

Dear Friends,

As some if know, I have been undergoing treatment for cancer over the past two or three years. The cancer has returned now for the second time and I hope you can bear with me while a share a reflection of what all this is meaning to me.

Several years ago, when we were living on Alaska Ave., we had invited a friend to dinner, and he was sharing his difficulty with God's grace in his life. Finally, I asked him, in frustration, why he thought he was so special. What I was thinking about was Jesus' disciples. True enough, they did not hesitate to leave property, family, and home to follow Jesus, but they consistently fail to understand Jesus, interrupt him when has withdrawn from the crowds to pray, arouse Jesus' impatience or frustration with their failure to understand the parables, and their lack of faith. Mark 8:16 recounts the disciples' worry "We have no bread", following the feeding of the 5,000 and then 4,000. It gets worse; they do not understand or accept the passion predictions, they have insufficient faith to heal an epileptic child, yearn for position of power or honor rather than service. Judas betrays Jesus, Peter denies him three times, and their last action together is to run away and abandon Jesus in Gethsemane. The women who follow Jesus come to the tomb with spices to anoint him, an unnecessary action if they knew about and believed in the resurrection.

But the Father and Son never gave up. The promised spirit came, and that little group changed the world. We must remember that God comes to us where we are, and he does not leave us or change. He just helps us, no matter how many times we fall, to get where he wants us to be. All we must do is hang in there and not give up, or, as Padre Pio reminds us. "Hope and pray and do not worry."

Recently, a friend of mine gave me a great little book "Radical Gratitude" by Mary Jo Leddy. Find a copy!! You can read it a zillion times and learn something each time about remembering who you are, where you are from and where you are going. I spend a little time with it every day, and I am reminded, again and again, that each new morning is a gift, and my life is not about "more and more" but where I come from and where I am going, and the fact that God is with me in all the good that I receive or give and all the mistakes I may make. At the transfiguration God says, "This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." I agree with Mary Jo Leddy when she says that we live in a culture that teaches that we never have enough and if we work harder and smarter, we can always have more; more stuff, more control, more whatever. When we fall into that trap, we lose focus and begin to forget all that we have and can be grateful for, especially this new morning.

Thank you for listening. Keep me in your prayers.

Tom Schulz

