

Journal entry by Father Dave, posted by Mary Garvey — Sep 18, 2021

Health Update:

Due to the connections of Monsignor, I was able to begin a new clinical trial with the Chan Soon Shiong Institute for Medicine in El Segundo on September 14th. It is a difficult regimen of 5 chemo drugs plus radiation for the first four weeks of the 18-month trial. My first 3 days have been hard, leaving me tired and without appetite. In order to control for the pain that has returned from not being on chemo for a month, I have been placed on morphine 24/7. Even with this, oxycodone is used for breakthrough pain that surges when the morphine is not enough. I now have doctors just advising me on how to handle pain. However, pain control allows me to be able to think somewhat clearly. My brother priests in the rectory (Monsignor, Fr. Prosper, Fr. David, and Fr. Vince) have gone to bat for me and have taken on much of my ministry in the parish, especially during the next 4-6 weeks when the radiation is the hardest.

Maureen, my sister, is recovering quickly from her recent health challenges. She will be in therapy and casts for at least another 12 weeks. Mom is looking at the challenging step of moving into assisted living. Both are courageous. Please keep them both in prayer.

Spiritual Reflection – Lourdes



It was a great blessing to be hosted by the Knights and Dames of Malta with 350 other people on a recent pilgrimage to Lourdes, France. Despite many challenges due to Covid, we were able to enter southern France and the experience of the shrine and baths for which Lourdes and Our Lady are so well known. My health throughout the experience was a challenge, but thank goodness for the generosity of the Knights and Dames. I was wheeled around in a voiture (cart) as one of the malades throughout my pilgrimage. The sick (60 of us) were the focus of the pilgrimage in an

experience of the unity of the Body of Christ through suffering and service.

Because I could not sleep hardly at all, I would rise at 5am and climb the stations on the back mountain of the beautiful region of the Pyrenees. It was around the Stations that I found my greatest consolation, walking with Christ in silence, in the dark, slowly plodding along. In our Catholic tradition there is a spirituality known as the “ministry of suffering”, which is often discussed among those with illnesses – terminal or otherwise. It is an experience of unity in the cross of Christ as a form of service to humanity by offering simply your daily cross as part of the economy of salvation – mystery of Christ’s paschal action and love.

It is not a spirituality of logic or understanding but rather an experience of unity and accompaniment. I was blessed during this time with a taste of this ministry for which I am very grateful.

Please know that it is from this place, when ministry as a priest changes due to this cancer. In Christ I continue to hold you and your families in my prayers. In the dark place of the cross, a place to which only Christ brings light and makes sense, good is being done. As the 14th Century St. Juliann of Norwich heard from Christ: "In the end, all will be well, all will be well." Another prayer that follows comes from the Lumieres (candle area) at Lourdes (photos attached)



*Jesus,
Light from Light, true God from true God.
Bernadette told us: "I saw a small young
lady enveloped in light who looked at me
and smiled."
This light of your Immaculate Mother is
the reflection of your Light,
You the conqueror of evil, sin and death!
You, the Risen Christ!
Today I place my candle in this burner.
Today or later it will burn in your
presence.*

*May it illuminate my joy, my gratitude, my
thanksgiving, your forgiveness and your immense mercy.
May it clear my doubts, extinguish my pain, my hurt, my suffering, my lost cause!
It also symbolizes my most secret thoughts, wishes and desires.*

*May the storms of life not extinguish the flame of love!
May I become like Him burning with love for You and for my brothers and sisters!
You, who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.
Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us!
St. Bernadette pray for us!*