

October 2, 2020
Feast of the Guardian Angels

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Through the sacraments, Jesus comes to touch us and give us his grace to do the work in the vineyard. He trusts us to produce fruit that will give glory to God and bring others to the grace of the sacraments. The sacraments are our lifeline to the grace needed to realize our vocation, to heal our wounds, and to strengthen our discipleship. How blessed are we to have them!

Throughout the pandemic some of our celebrations look quite different than before. During this pandemic many people have been strengthened by the Church's encouragement of Eucharistic Spiritual Communion for those concerned about entering the church during this time. God's grace comes to us by faithfully receiving physically and spiritually these sacraments. Nothing is impossible with God.

In recent weeks I have come to understand the sacraments a little differently. As the world has been battling Covid-19, my family has been battling a different set of medical issues that God has laid upon our shoulders. Earlier this year my brother was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. This past summer my sister-in-law was diagnosed with breast cancer. And in August, I was diagnosed with rectal cancer. Both my brother and sister-in-law are fighting hard and progressing well with their treatments. Please keep them and their families in your prayers.

Throughout August and September I completed a variety of medical tests to determine spread, stage, and treatment. An MRI revealed that some of the lymph nodes in that specific area are affected, but thankfully there has been no spread to any other organs, categorizing my cancer as stage 3. My doctors believe this cancer is curable, and this past week I started treatment. This first phase includes 28 treatments of radiation along with pill-based chemotherapy every Monday through Friday. After a short break I will start the second phase, four months of moderate chemotherapy. This will begin around the start of Advent. The third phase, currently planned for Spring, is surgery.

My brother stopped by last week, and we talked about the challenges that he faced with his cancer and his treatments. I do not know how radiation and chemotherapy will affect my physical body and my parish responsibilities. My main concern is the sacramental life of the parish. I intend to continue my work as I am able to ensure the availability of the sacraments. Fr. Deo has offered to do whatever he can, and several other priests have offered to come help so our sacramental life will continue to bring the grace of God to those who seek the touch of Jesus.

The only sacrament that a priest can administer to himself is the celebration of Mass and receiving the Eucharist. Like you, I need a priest to hear my confession and anoint. I was incredibly grateful to Fr. Deo for his willingness to offer the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick to my brother and myself during his recent visit. That was my first time receiving the sacrament, and to experience it with my brother was very powerful. Although I joked with Fr. Deo afterward that he missed a few parts of the rite...

Recall and reflect on the parable in this weekend's gospel. It reminds us all that we have work to do. Let us thank God for the sacraments, a testament to how much He loves us and encourages us to do the work for which we are accountable. Let us pray for one another, receive the sacraments honestly and faithfully, and trust that Jesus is guiding us to provide great fruit to the Father.

Peace of Christ,

Fr. Workman

A Prayer to the Holy Guardian Angels

Heavenly Father,

Your infinite love for us has chosen a blessed angel in heaven and appointed him our guide during this earthly pilgrimage. Accept our thanks for so great a blessing. Grant that we may experience the assistance of our holy protector in all our necessities. And you, holy, loving angel and guide, watch over us with all the tenderness of your angelic heart. Keep us always on the way that leads to heaven, and cease not to pray for us until we have attained our final destiny, eternal salvation. Then we shall love You for all eternity. We shall praise and glorify You unceasingly for all the good You have done for us while here on earth. Especially be a faithful and watchful protector of our children. Take our place, and supply what may be wanting to us through human frailty, short-sightedness, or sinful neglect. Lighten, O you perfect servants of God, our heavy task. Guide our children, that they may become like unto Jesus, may imitate Him faithfully, and persevere till they attain eternal life. Amen