

June 27, 2021

Dear Praying Family and Friends,

Below is a delayed update. I'm entering the "slogging" phase of my treatment, and the news that is news is trivial - mostly confined to comparing notes with the few of you who've wandered these paths in the past. But here's the "small events" Executive Summary.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This visit was just six days, not seven - a big deal to me! Yes, it sometimes takes seven days to complete an infusion, what with all the hospital admin that crowds the schedule.
- Last update, I promised an update from the hospital, but when I opened my laptop case, the power cord/adaptor was missing! In my haste to escape from the previous visit, I left it behind, and it never showed up in lost and found. My kingdom for a nail and all that.
- I endured this stay - even without the laptop! - in much better form. Am I acclimatizing to chemo drugs? Stranger things have happened. It appears I am acclimatizing to prednisone - ordinarily a deluxe upper in the quantities I'm taking it during that week. *I slept well after the first night.* Thank you for your prayers!
- The best short-term outcome is that my blood sugar levels remained stable and normal. This is a miracle of sorts. And not only from the biochemical angle. It amounts to a stupendous victory in my struggle with the hospital endocrinology department, which last time insisted on pouring higher and higher doses of insulin into my insulin **resistant** body, resulting in blood sugar readings of near 500 before they listened to how I've kept my blood sugar within limits for a decade with the drugs they had **taken away** from me.

See? I'm wandering into tedious hospital anecdotes, usually the conversation fare of old people whose lives have at last been overtaken by the curse and the fall. Boring.

## BLESSINGS

Indeed, there are many, one of which I just mentioned.

- The floor staff are consistently kind, efficient, and encouraging. I am so grateful for them all, and grateful for all of you whose prayers bring me this sort of comfort.
- The food is amazing. I was a cook in the United States Marine Corps, and I know what institutional cooking can and cannot do. Whoever runs that hospital kitchen, and all its staff, are astoundingly good. What a blessing.
- The effects of the chemo are minimal. As I said before, the prednisone seems to keep me on a mild "high" which results in alertness, an odd sense of well-being (considering the situation). Chemo can be invigorating. Who knew?
- Barbara has her own sort of slog. We're learning how thoroughly wedded into a mutual domestic partnership we've become in 40 years. And that makes me think of all the richness that's come my way in those four decades, chief among them my wife, worth more than her weight in rubies; all four of my daughters; their handsome and godly husbands; and my darling grandchildren. Rich, rich, rich! They're all in the faith, advancing our Lord's Kingdom. And all of them encourage me that my lovely

bride will not lack for comfort and care if I precede her out of this world.

## NEXT STEPS

This week will be something of a physical downer as my blood counts drop. For now, I'm a walking, talking chemistry set. Antibiotics, antifungals, antivirals, a new drug called acalabrutinib (trying saying that five times rapidly!) which I take at 6:00 AM and 6:00 PM. It was first approved for use in some types of lymphoma in 2017, and it greatly slows down the progress of the disease, giving my oncologist time to deploy other more powerful therapies. As the therapy twists and turns toward science-fiction-like genetic therapy approaches (Lord willing), I'll give you details on those steps.

Meanwhile, I'm bearing up through the various side effects (mostly suppressed immune system) by quarantining at home. The internet is my chief window on the world (most of which I'm appalled to look at), and email from you is one of my major joys. Thank you, to all you who have dropped me notes of encouragement. You have no idea how much of a blessing that is!

My next sojourn in the hospital is scheduled for July 12. I now own TWO power cords for my laptop (they're plentiful and cheap). And my trusty desktop is hanging in there just fine. I plan to bring you an update in a couple of weeks, just before I enter the hospital for the third cycle of chemo. After that, or perhaps after a fourth cycle, we'll assess the progress and plan the next steps.

Much love to all of you in Him,

Fr. Bill