



IF ONLY YOU KNEW THE GIFTS GOD WANTS TO GIVE YOU, *gifts of Divine Providence*

Dear Folks,

As August comes to a close, I feel compelled to express my profound gratitude to our good and provident God for his boundless mercies and I want to share this story of God's goodness and provident care. And I am deeply indebted to everyone for their prayers and support. In 2000, I remember hearing the story of Jesus meeting the woman at the well. This slightly different translation of John 4:10 touched my soul and it resounds now as well. Jesus said to the woman, "If only you knew the gift God wants to give you..."

When I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2010, my oncologist, La Reina alum dad Dr. Michael Masterson, sent me for a PET scan to see if there were any additional malignancies. In his unique way, he informed me, "by the way, you have a spot on your brain." And my response was that I had many friends who would confirm that. He referred me to Dr. Jim Chan, a local neurosurgeon. The spots (actually 2) were benign meningioma tumors. They are not unusual and may be asymptomatic. Dr. Chan and I pursued a wait-and-see approach since I had no symptoms. In my last appointment with him, he commented that with their growth rate and my parents' longevity, I would need to deal with the larger one at some point. Procrastinate I did, awaiting symptoms...

Earlier in 2010, my niece's husband, Jeff Ogan, had meningiomas that were impacting his balance and his speech. He had the surgery but unfortunately acquired 2 cases of MRSA and then spinal meningitis. We Megaffin/Smock gals spent time in Atlanta, being a nanny for their son, Connor, so that Julie could spend as much time as possible with Jeff while he was in rehab. (This was the first time I had done single-handed nanny-duty since 1966. High chairs, car seats and strollers certainly change over time!) So when I had the same diagnosis, my anxiety ran high. I never told my family of my situation until it all unfolded this month. Jeff is very much our hero, finding meaning as a "room mom" for their 2 sons. He putters around Hermosa Beach in his golf cart and inspires many by his positive attitude.

I had spent the weekend of Aug. 5 and 6 giving mission appeals at Immaculate Conception Church in Astoria,

New York. On the return trip, I experienced a grand-mal seizure. When I awakened, my 2 seat mates were different. Kelsey Usselman was next to me and peppered me with questions--my name, destination, etc. As it happens, she is a nurse at Los Robles Hospital here in Thousand Oaks. She was accompanied on the plane by 2 other medical guardian angels: Dr. Susie Anderson and Dr. Peter-Brian Anderson--both neurologists. They drove me to Thousand Oaks that Monday morning. What a blessing to be able to walk into an Emergency Room in-take nurse and have a medical professional outline the situation for the hospital staff. The gifts God wanted to give me were unfolding by leaps and bounds.

The Sisters of Notre Dame, my family, friends and colleagues shared my journey. Sr. Antoinette Marie Moon called Fr. Jim Stehly to ask if he could anoint me; when he answered the phone, he was already at the hospital! This situation dispelled the last remnants of anxiety... Kris Carraway-Bowman, La Reina alum mom and an officer at Los Robles, brought me her special reassurance, as did Dr. Masterson and Dr. Russ Spoto, a long-time SND friend. The 5.5 hour surgery (!) was on Aug. 10--the anniversary of our perpetual vows. Dr. Chan was confident from the conclusion of the surgery that I would not need therapy.

As you can imagine, there have been moments of spiritual and emotional awakening through this journey. God's goodness and provident care surrounds us--as we well know! I am particularly grateful to Sr. Ann Carla Costello, Sr. Amy Hauck and my co-sisters at Villa Regina for all of their loving attention. Special thanks, too, for your calls, cards, emails, texts and promises of continued prayer. We are blessed to have an awesome Mission Advancement Team--Jen Coito, Sarah Marcuse and Lisa Stupar are doing a great job--their dedication to the SND spirit and mission is inspiring and their professionalism is a great gift. In God's providence, we had only been working together since July 12!

The gifts God wants to give us are gifts to be shared, and I commit myself to doing just that.

Grateful blessings always,
Sr. Lisa Megaffin, S.N.D.