

Glimmers of Grace

Peg Garguilo

9 December 2018

GRACE

I am broken. Disoriented. Desperate. Lonely. My ego is crushed. All dignity is lost. I am in indescribable and confusing pain. I am hospitalized. I had prayed to be the perfect cancer patient.

But, I had fallen prey to neutropenia. This is a condition all chemo patients are warned about. It is when your white blood cell count is low or non-existent, making you susceptible to any and all bacterial infections. My body was all in and welcomed the agony of this condition. I was losing power to battle. Major building blocks were breaking down. I vividly recall moments when I welcomed departure.

GLIMMERS OF GRACE.

Silent, private moments begging God for mercy. In the wee hours of the morning. Prayers offered from a state of delirium. Viscous, slow moving, repetitive wishes for relief from relentless head-banging pain. Escape from my sick body. I prayed to God, Jesus, Mary, saints, angels. Gradually, I deliberately and silently settled with God all of my transgressions. Eventually, I felt cocooned in peace. I nestled into it. It erased fear. It calmed me. I was not alone. And I knew to hang on. **GLIMMERS OF GRACE.**

Like water, God's mercy and grace flowed and washed over me until my spirit was alert and I felt a peace that is to this day is difficult to describe. The whispers spoken to my heart were filled with intense compassion for those who entered my hospital room. An acute awareness of and love for the souls who cared for me in so many ways and shared their god-given gifts to heal me. **GLIMMERS OF GRACE.**

From John sitting vigilantly while I slipped in and out of a sleep. To Emily crawling into bed with me and showing up with smoothies. To Dom putting on a brave face as he left for his first year of college. These of course are people I know, love and cherish. But God also worked through Kittie, the singing cleaning lady who prayed with me. Through the young night shift nurses who comforted me. Through the powerful team of doctors who interceded to balance my body's chemistry. **GLIMMERS OF GRACE.**

Of course, my journey is not unique. God did not answer my original prayers for a benign tumor. Nor did he answer my prayers to be the perfect below-the-radar cancer patient. Nor did he answer my prayers to depart. I am grateful for my unanswered prayers. Because, while the chemotherapy treatments changed my body at a molecular level, God's Grace renewed and re-rooted my spirit. It was as if God had gently guided me by the shoulders and reminded me that none of this is about me. Rather, it is about those individuals I encounter, whether on purpose or by accident. **GLIMMERS OF GRACE**

I have to work at it, but this journey has instilled in me a lasting desire to:

- To Recognize the strength and dignity of the human spirit. Every person's human spirit
- To Pause and seize opportunities to share my God-given gifts – no matter how fleeting – a SMILE, a HUG
- To Seek a state of humility
- To be Open to and faithfully Accept what is placed in my path

Two years later I am speaking from a flawed, mostly healed human body with a regenerated spirit. I am certain that this opportunity to share my experience is a Glimmer of God's Grace. I pray that as we fumble through life, especially during this holiday season, each of us is able to pause and give way to impulses to share God's presence with those whose lives cross our paths. That we may celebrate the **GLIMMERS OF GRACE** that nourish and fortify one another's spirits.