

The Charlotte District E-Pistle

April 20, 2008

Colleagues:

The narratives of the gospel writers disclose the rhythms of accessibility and private meditation in the life of Jesus. Our Lord prepared for his ministry by entering the wilderness. In Galilee he escaped from the massive crowds that followed him by going out into the hillsides to engage in prayer alone. In every circumstance of encroaching crisis, Jesus found solace within solitude.

I am grateful for every e-mail and phone message that has come to me in these rapidly moving days since learning about tomorrow's surgery. The pre-operation requirements of the hospital and the vast number of obligatory chores have prevented me from giving attention to your acts of kindness that you have generously communicated. I do not now know when I shall get around to reading all the messages of encouragement that have arrived. All these kind expressions are appreciated. But, the constraints of time will not allow me to respond with a personal acknowledgement. Just know that the assurance of your prayers is the source of a great blessing for me.

As I prepare for the time of surgery in the moments before receiving anesthesia, I shall try to concentrate upon the following lines from the pen of Paul:

⁵Let the same mind be in you that was^{*} in Christ Jesus
⁶who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
⁷but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave” –Philippians 2:5-7 NRSV

The mind of Christ leads me to an inner peace, an absence of paralyzing anxiety, and a presence of overwhelming gratitude. I am thankful for the disclosure of this problem, the medical technology that can help cure it, the love that surrounds me, and hope that is eternal.

In addition to this writing from the pen of Paul, my thoughts will be upon a favorite hymn—*For the Beauty of the Earth*. The melody within my memory is the composition by John Rutter. You will hear the harmonious sounds that will hopefully fill my conscious mind tomorrow if you reference this U-Tube treasure recorded at St. Paul's Cathedral in London (use the Google search for this composer, the title and the performance at this cathedral).

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_LfvZVwCOI&feature=related

Pat has been a special source of strength for me in all times and seasons, and I know that you will provide undergirding prayers of intercession on her behalf as I fall into the protective sleep provided by anesthesia.

How blessed indeed we are by the assurance of your friendship and the power of your prayers.

Grace and peace,

George