

From: Ross Lence
To: Tom Kirkendall, et al
Sent: Thursday, August 19, 2005 9:36 PM
Subject: Today's Developments

Thank you all for your expressions of concern and love. Your prayers and well-wishes are greatly appreciated. I am pleased to say that I am today "marked" and ready for the radiation treatments which are to begin on Monday as planned. Tomorrow I return to the clinic to make sure that the markings are in the right place and for x-rays. Monday afternoon it is radiation, followed by chemo through my new port. (It is nice to have new parts, even if they are artificial).

There is a sort of irony that on the day classes begin (usually the most exciting day of the whole academic year) I will be undergoing treatments, while the students start their fall classes for the first time. If I were able to send any message to them it would be to study hard, have fun, and remember that Monday is the first day of their new life — a life of books, peace, and joy.

As I reflect on my own life, and those who have meant so much to me, I am reminded of Scripture when it says: "The Spirit is a friend of man." God is with me now as he has always been. He has been good to me in life; there is no real to fear that he will not be with me in death. His will be done. I just hope he has some good reason for wanting to keep me around for awhile. I am more than willing to stay. I am determined with his help and your prayers to live to see another day. I will not yield up life without a struggle, but I also can say with confidence: "Death where is your victory; Death where is your sting."

I am at the beginning of a long ascent. Keep me in your prayers.

Vale

rml

From: Ross Lence
To: Tom Kirkendall, et al
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2005 9:09 PM
Subject: Lord bring me down a miracle

My dearest friends.

For the past thirty years, I have offered the attached prayer at our College Convocation. I believed what I said then, and know it true tonight as I prepare for chemo and radiation tomorrow. Each of you is very special to me. Pray for me, as I will pray for you.

Salutem in Domino.
[“Greetings in the Lord”]

In honor of our graduates today, and in memory of all those who have made this day possible — both living and dead — we pause in a moment of thanksgiving and gratitude. We give special thanks to the young women and men who have given their lives so others may live in freedom.

Whether we consider natural reason or revelation, whether we turn to the Arabic texts of Alfarabi, the Hebrew texts of Moses Maimonides, or the Christian texts of Thomas Aquinas, ‘tis very clear, as Scripture says, “Fear of the Lord is the beginning of all wisdom.”

But that wisdom is more than reason alone: Intellectual virtue in the absence of moral prudence is undirected, unguided, and uninspired. It is in that context, then, that we understand the words of St. John when he said:

“No one should doubt that ‘the Spirit is a Friend of Man.’”

Logos calls us to a life of peace with ourselves, to a life that knows when to probe, when to reflect and when to laugh. Logos calls us to a life of charity towards other human beings of all races and creeds. Logos allows us to recognize the stranger on the road to Emmaus so that we too can say: “*Mane nobiscum, Domine, quoniam advenperascit*” (“Lord, stay with us for the hour is getting late”).

It is in that context, then, that we pray today that we might be bold in our thoughts, moderate in our actions, moderate in our actions, and courageous in our defense of the regime, so that, in the end, we too can share in those immortal words of San Cecilia, which have been repeated every year in this ceremony for the past 30 years:

Domine Salvam Fac Republicam Et Exaudi Nos in Die Qua Invocaverimus Te. [“Lord, make safe our Republic and hear our prayer until that day when we shall be called before thee.”]

I hope the next time you hear me deliver those words at the College Commencement, that they will mean as much to you as they mean to me. As one of the women from the Women's Institute said to me when we were at the funeral of my friend, the giant geographer, John Coffman: "There is something nice to be said for tradition."

Pray for me, my friends, as I will pray for you.

Mane nobiscum, Domine, quoniam advesperascit.
[“Lord, stay with us for the hour is getting late.”]

rml

From: Ross Lence
To: Tom Kirkendall, et al
Sent: Sunday, August 28, 2005 8:41 PM
Subject: Tomorrow is the beginning of Week II

My friends,

Tomorrow marks the beginning of the second week of chemo and radiation treatments. The weekend has been uneventful, although I continue to gain weight again — Mother's cooking is considerably better than the hospital's.

Each day without complications is a gift from God--as each of you is. I thank you for your continued good wishes and prayers. The doctor's are reserved, but each day I pray out: "Lord send me down a miracle." There is too much work to be done. Too many minds to be educated. Too many souls to be saved from the SMB (Society of Modern Barbarians).

We must never forget the words of Mark 11.23-25:

"Have faith in God. I tell you solemnly, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Get up and throw thyself into the sea,' with no hesitation in his heart but believing that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. I tell you therefore: everything you ask and pray for, believe that have it already, and it will be yours."

Although the technicians do not believe me, I tell you I have felt the tumor pull from its path; I have felt it burn in the fires of the radiation.

Thanks again. Onward to the end of week two.

rml

From: Ross Lence
To: Tom Kirkendall, et al
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2005 6:52 PM
Subject: Day 7

Friends,

With all of your good prayers and well-wishes, I am pleased to say that day seven of the chemo and radiation treatments has passed without any noticeable negative consequences. In fact, the doctor today seemed quite perplexed that I have had no change in my eating habits (unless you call eating everything I can get my hands on a change). In the past week, I have gained three pounds back from my hospital stay. My blood count remains largely the same.

Thanks for your prayers. I am certain I will live another day to haunt the students of the University.

And on that note, I spent the early hours of today fishing. Well sort of fishing. Each semester I pick out some students more or less at random who I believe could use some good advising. I called one of them this morning just out of the blue, and I am pleased to say that he accepted my offer to meet with him. Of course, I am reminded of that day a few years ago when I was in my office advising students. One student had just left. I called out for the next student to come in. Then I heard a student say: "It is not your turn. I have been waiting three hours to meet with him." Apologizing for the delay, she said: "No problem. I have been here before." Puffing up with pride, I said: "Well, if you have been here before and have waited this long, the advice must have been good." "Oh, not really," she said. "But you are the only person I have ever met on this campus that when I tell people that I got the information from Professor Lence, they say that will be fine."

Thanks again for your prayers. But do not stop.

rml

From: Ross Lence
To: Tom Kirkendall, et al
Sent: Thursday, September 1, 2005 7:56 PM
Subject: Tomorrow is the end of the second week

Friends,

Just a quick note tonight to say that tomorrow is the end of the second week. I am also pleased to announce that I spoke with Dr. Bharwani (the chemo doctor) and she was most pleased with my progress. Not only have I gained weight, but the liver counts had moved from dangerously high to almost normal in a single week. Your prayers and good wishes are certainly having a very positive effect. To date, thanks be to God, I have suffered no negative side effects.

Thanks for your well-wishes.

rml

From: Ross Lence

To: Tom Kirkendall, et al

Sent: Monday, September 5, 2005 10:27 PM

Subject: Tomorrow is the beginning of the Third Week and the Opening Day at the Women's Institute

Urbi et Orbi

Tomorrow is another big day. Just fifteen more days of chemo and radiation treatments! So far, by the Grace of God and your prayers, all has gone well.

Tomorrow is also the first day of classes again--this time at the Women's Institute. My love to all of the ladies and gentlemen of the Institute. You are an inspiration to me. Thank you for your thoughts, prayers, and messages.

Speaking of messages, I have learned a lot about you--and about me. I will share some of those discoveries later on. You are a most gracious group, however. I salute you.

Gaudeamus,

Ross

From: Ross Lence

To: Tom Kirkendall, et al

Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2005 4:55 PM

Subject: Today is "hump" day and all is well

Urbi et Orbi

To my friends and well-wishers

Salutem in Domino

Today is "hump" day--thirteen treatments down; twelve to go. Still things are good. No loss of weight, appetite, etc. Truly a gift from God. I thank you all for your prayers.

The only noticeable side effect is the sleep that I seem to need all day and night--but there are certainly worse things than sleep, as many of you can well attest.

Thanks again for all your good thoughts and wishes, and of course, your prayers.

Gaudeamus,

Ross

From: Ross Lence
To: Tom Kirkendall, et al
Sent: Tuesday, September 20, 2005 8:08 AM
Subject: 80% down; 5 treatments to go

Urbi et Orbi,

Just a quick note this morning to say that all is still going well. I have now completed 20 of the 25 treatments, and still no negative side effects other than constant fatigue. Still, if one has to have a side effect, sleeping is the one to have.

The CT scan has now been scheduled (October 25th) to determine if the tumor has shrunk up enough to operate. There is no reason to think that it has not shrunk, given my good health, but there is always some fear. Doubt seems fully consistent with faith. I am encouraged by the example of Peter. Seeing Christ in person, Peter still could not keep awake during Christ's last days before the trial and death. And if Peter can deny Christ three times before the cock crows, there seems to be little reason to fear a little doubt. Please do not stop your prayers, but as we are so often been told: His will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

I want to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your caring and concern. Your enormous expressions of love have been gratefully received, by both me and my Mother. You are all in my own prayers.

Thanks again. Gaudeamus,

Ross

From: Ross Lence
To: Tom Kirkendall
Sent: Wednesday, September 21, 2005 4:55 PM
Subject: Hurricane Rita and the last three treatments

Greetings to all those staying, fleeing, and hearing about hurricane Rita,

Mom and I are joining many of our neighbors in staying put for the impending hurricane. This promises to be a real storm and our hearts and prayers go out to all those whose homes are in the lower areas of the Gulf.

Since the clinic has closed, the staff removed the chemo pouch for the weekend today. That means that I will have three additional treatments next week, before ringing the bell to signal the end of my radiation treatments. I spoke with the radiologist today (Dr. Carpenter) and in his words: "You have done very, very well. There will be no reason for you to see me again." He then told me of several cases like mine where people have gained weight during the treatments (13.5 lbs since the treatment began) and that surgery or additional chemo solved the problem--or at least greatly alleviated it. I still believe that the Lord will send me down a miracle.

Peace and love to you all. Pray for those less fortunate than ourselves.

Ross

From: Ross Lence
To: Tom Kirkendall
Sent: Wednesday, September 28, 2005 4:35 PM
Subject: September 28, 2005--Let us Rejoice

Urbi et Orbi

Today marked the end of my chemo and radiation treatments. It is hard to believe twenty-five treatments could pass so slowly and so quickly at the same time. Augustine's notion of time is, I believe, responsible for this strange encounter with the Divine.

Twenty-five treatments and no negative side-effects. Your prayers, letters, well-wishes, cards, food, flowers, books, and prayer Masses have all had their effect. I thank all those who took time off to drive me to the clinic and all those who visited me. I thank God for His graces and for my many friends.

I have an appointment with the surgeon next week, a CT scan on October 25, and then several doctor appointments following the scan. Let us pray that the rest of my recovery goes as smoothly as this first segment.

Special prayers for Nancy Corkill, Elsa Swinbank, Stephanie and Johnny Leech, and any other persons who are ill or who have suffered a loss of loved ones since I began my treatments.

Peace and blessings to all of you.

I realize that not everyone is on my distribution list. If you know of anyone who would (or should) be added, please let me know and I will be most pleased to add them.

Ross

From: Ross Lence
To: Tom Kirkendall, et al
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2005 6:47 PM
Subject: latest update

Urbi et Orbi,

It has now been seven days since the chemo/radiation treatments have ended. Still the only noticeable side effect is fatigue. I spoke with the surgeon Tuesday of this week, but most of the conversation was about statistical information about pancreatic cancer, since there has been no CT-scan since the treatments began. He had spoken with the radiologist, however, who told him that I looked good and that the treatments had gone very well. Dr. Fisher (the surgeon) also noted how good I looked, but he is a cautious man — a good thing in a surgeon.

Today Jim Tyler heard from the chemotherapist who was pleased that my tumor markers have fallen some 60% from the on-set of the disease. This fact, combined with the positive reaction to the treatments, I take to be a very good sign that St. Luke's mountain is moving.

My CT-scan has been moved to October 27th, and I see the doctors on All Saints Day. As the old R & R Brew Bucket for the sick used to say: "May the Saints Preserve You."

My love to all of you. Your prayers and well wishes are not only appreciated, but are obviously working.

Ross