

"I Love you, Daddy"

22 Mar 22

"Tell her that hearing those words melted my heart. I could not ask for anything more than that from her right now. I'll explain later when I can give her a hug. She replied, "If there's anything about this that I've ~~learned~~ learned it's to not take ~~pe~~ anyone for granted. 🤗 "We love you too baby girl."

Hold on, let me step back a second. I am now on a 62 hour stretch with 2 ~~hours~~ hours sleep at the end of a nearly deadly battle with sepsis, et.al. Plans were to be starting this around 1pm today, but as you'll see, plans change... a lot! Those words at the beginning were a direct quote from my fiancée, Lisa's phone after my beautiful daughter and first-born, Whitney called me daddy for the first time since she was 3 in 1990. I went to war soon after her mother and I split in non-amicable terms to say the least. I didn't know until they left the country that it was SGT Mike Norris, my ~~squad~~ squad leader in Desert Storm she was sleeping with, but he died last week, rest his soul, a fact that plays into those words.

So, two chapters in, we finally get to the beginning. Well, that's not exactly true now, either. But it is a recounting of my path to the Lord and it happened shortly after I turned 52, so like any other telling of a part of one's life, it starts toward the end. This one began with Lisa's suggestion that I, (we actually) started taking better care of ourselves which included a full physical at 50. Well, plans change, remember? As we returned from the RSA conference in San Francisco in Feb. of 2020, they were talking about COVID-19, then in March things shut down for a bit. In May 2021 I made the appointment. Dr Misagh told me my PSA was 3.6 but 4 was the threshold to

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check for cancer. He said "Let's do a quick prostate exam." So we did and he said he thought he felt something and referred me to a urologist at the VA in Huntington. About a month later I had an appointment with them.

And then, as we have already discovered, Prayer works. Plans change as well as we have already discovered. Now at the part I was writing, I got a phone call from my son. Initial reaction jumped to worry, then knowing the system, curiosity. I answered on the 2d ring and he was excited. They won a battle streamer and got an extra 30 minutes of phone time. They did the gas chamber and he was stoked about it. Oh, and the confidence course on the same day. But I don't want to get ahead of the story, so back to work.

I'll get the doc's info from them before the print version of this. When I went in, she explained what Dr Misaghi told me and performed her exam. She was surprised that he had felt anything it was so small. She went into great detail that I have elsewhere ~~to~~ explaining my options: monitor in six months, needle biopsy, removal.

About Over the last 10 or 15 years of my life I have begun giving serious thoughts to what kind of spirituality to raise our son. His mother Tiffany, rest her soul, was a great lady I need to devote at least a chapter to. In a nutshell, we met while I was deployed to war #2, the first mobilization after 9/11 when my unit went to Ft Campbell KY to head on to Uzbekistan one of the Stans to set up an FOB for special operations in Afghanistan. Again as fate would have it I met ~~her~~ Tif on Christmas leave, broke my ankle, and ended up running the battalion from Ft Campbell. I + really pissed them off but Tif got

pregnant. Bad for them - good for me. That's also another chapter, but suffice it to say, we remained close after the divorce to raise Morgan. I also respected her because she was a great, powerful woman, awesome friend, and role model who left a hole in more ways that I can comprehend, but I digress.

One of the lessons I learned on the various paths I have began, gave up on, stumbled across, been forced down, whatever, I learned that sometimes it's better to refer to experts. Don't get me wrong, I firmly hold to the old, "Jack of all trades, master of none, but better than a master of one". But, in certain areas, like medical, a master of one is the wise choice.

So I said "Doc, I'm a computer guy and network guy and a lot of other things. If you need a pentest, I got you. I know nothing about this. What do you recommend?" She said hold on and left for a few minutes and returned saying "We think you should get the biopsy and go from there". I thanked her and said done. I later found out she was just a resident, but a very knowledgeable angel placed there as a lot of others had been, starting with Dr Misagh. She will be a fine, compassionate doctor and was one of the angels guiding me down to, or back to, the path. We talked for a few more minutes and I hope that if I didn't make an impression that when she reads this she realizes that just how important she is and how much I appreciate her.

It took almost six months to get the biopsy and Morgan had a ship date to basic and advanced training at Ft Leonardwood MO on 25 Jan. ~~Base~~ After the biopsy, ~~we~~ Lisa and I went to the follow-up I believe on

27 Dec. We sat down after we walked in with Dr Hale of CAMC, a referral since the VA didn't have that machine. He smiled a little off and sure enough, 2 of 27 samples were cancerous. He is one of the best in the valley on this subject, as is Dr Deem and the rest of his team. Not only masters of one but also angels. He also went into great detail of the options: do nothing and check in six months, take it out, or total prostate removal. Great detail indeed, but this time Lisa was with me. So I told him in close but not exactly the same as I had told the last doc, what would you do?

I knew I had found one of the many angels on this trip when his eyes lit up, he smiled, and his jaw dropped. He said "I was not prepared for that!" He went on to say how most of his patients would ask a lot of questions or then talk it over and make the wrong choice and there was nothing he could do. His master of one, a medical degree, specialty degree, and 11 years to become one of the best meant nothing. We talked for a while if I recall and he set me to complete ease for a cancer diagnosis, way too easy as it would turn out, but all of that was mine and mine alone. He is already at the top of his field and has a great team and it shows in his bedside manner. You can still see the compassion. He said they could get me in around early Feb, but I said we would have to talk about the timing with Morgan and left feeling great about having cancer. It's all in the ~~the~~ delivery I guess. His graduation was going to be 7 Apr, so I chose 3 Mar so that I could work enough to set aside some money for the two weeks I could take off and still work enough so I could cover the

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trip to Ft Leonardwood and the stay. Yeah. Two weeks. Notice the date when you started? 22 March 22. Rest of the week is shot sorry to the two I had to cancel, but 3 days in SICU - (pronounced sick-you as I learned after I left) for surgical ICU takes the wind out of you, especially when you get the details of just how bad it was. I think I knew at the time, but with all the 'shuns I had going on it is a little blurry in spots. 'Shuns is hallucinations, revelations, and inspirations. I want to get this part out and try to get a photocopy to all the angels who saved my life before continuing the rest of the story. But I did tell them all they were being written about, and why - that they were all instrumental in not only finding my path but the actually helped save my life as well. And there I go rambling again, but it has been a rough day in the best way possible. Daughter called me daddy for the first time in years, son is doing great, out of the hospital, not dead, faith confirmed with visions, and in the absolute best place because of it. Oh, and 66 hours on 2 hours sleep and the visions. I cannot wait to see how this ends.

So, I worked the day before the procedure, went in at 5 AM for preop and it lasted the normal three hours they predicted and was other wise uneventful. Of course I knew none of that as I don't ever recall falling asleep this time. I just woke up from the scheduled (but ~~have now~~ later found out started at 7:55 due to my 15 min. tardiness) around 1 pm if I recall correctly, I had to leave my watch and was groggy. In hindsight, these two key factors in the sleeping and awakening should have been my first clue ~~to~~ to not be non-chalant about it and take it a little more

seriously, especially the part that is coming up - after care. I was going to take it easy, the whole don't lift over 10 lbs was covered by an SD-WAN install using around \$ plus my laptop which had a strap and was no issue at all. The few tools I needed made the case weigh about 20, but it had also been a week after surgery and obviously I wouldn't plan on doing a lot with the cat still in 'til the next day. Interesting that the pen I started with just ran out of ink. That was the last one I used from the deployment in '01.

Anyway, I was still messed up from the surgery as she transferred the cat to a leg bag, mistake # whatever at this point, just small ones so call this #1. I went home and took it easy, sat on the computer as normal, but just to catch up - about an hour and then got up and walked around, but just a bit. Since it still hurt some, I ate a half or a whole I think can of soup - progresso bacon and potato to keep it light. I set up the cat so I could hang it while I slept and went to bed. Had to get up and pee once - sign #2 that I had no idea I had. Now, I switched out to my sleeping bag, since I know about it and should be good. I took a pain pill before bed, the one I allow myself after a surgery to sleep. I have lost way too many friends to drugs who started on pain pills to not learn that lesson. They also consitipate me, something I learned when the rule started after hemorrhoid surgery. The night passed otherwise uneventful and at 6.30 or so I got up as usual, minus the coffee this time and got on the computer for a bit 'til Lisa got up shortly after, then I walked -

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paced rather, around a bit. I ate, then watched some TV with her, paced, etc. and felt pretty good, except for the discomfort of the cat. But I was taking it easy and not sitting in one place too long nor spending too much time upright at my desk. And the pacing helped. I think it was Monday that something happened - cough, sneeze, twist, something - that caused a pop and slight pain near the pubic bone for a second. Again, hindsight would come to find this small pop almost killed me. And I didn't even know the clock was ticking.

Sorry, that'll be at least two paragraphs, perhaps three in the book. Long day and all that. Well, you've read it, or at least skimmed it.

On Wednesday, the job was up, but it was a little easier than I had imagined and I stripped the tool bag down to bare essentials and 5 lbs and made 2 trips to the car. The router was in the network room and I made 2 trips. Mounted, hooked up the console cable, called the NOC and she remoted in and did the install while I squatted for an hour. I learned that 2 Windows 10 computers can use the built in tool more safely than a commercial product. I went home and had the most excruciating pain of my entire life for about 2 minutes that stretched into an eternity. I knew I had a UTI at that point, but was scheduled for cat removal the next day, so made the first of several vital delays that would end up almost doing me in. And besides, it wasn't hurting any more. And this wasn't THAT bad, was it? I should just keep an eye on it, I can wait 'til tomorrow. WRONG. WRONG. WRONG. WRONG. But, but.

So I called my sister, bless her soul, an RN who confirmed I probably had a UTI and it would be OK to wait. And it was, really, you'll see ~~again~~

I got up, had some pain but not too much and time rolled around and I went to get the car out. It came out easy she said, yes I most likely had a UTI but it had just started and I may be able to flush it out. I had to pee that day or come back, I stopped at Carolyn's - Tif's mother - bless her soul - and while there I pissed. Same pain but ~~it~~ it was after I pissed and I could not move for about a min. Good, shorter I thought, and it was both, so I rested a few moments and drove home. After I came home, I went again, same pain, 30 seconds. OK. good but instead of waiting, I went to the VA clinic to get meds and see Dr Misaghi, the angel who started this piece of the journey. We had developed a rapport over the years and I was anxious to get an update on his son and give mine, as well as thank him again and report another successful save. I was shocked when the nurse doing the exam said he had retired! Devastated would be closer I guess, as we had become friends. Dr Mahmood was a good replacement however and told me it was very important that I empty my bladder entirely when I went so that I flushed out the bacteria and healed from the surgery.

Now you may recall that the clock has been ticking and that right now nobody is aware of it. Let me take a few lines to elaborate on it. All of this is coming from the knowledge of the way things went at the time which Lisa and I had discussed as it was happening,



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information that I got from several specialists after the fact, and the written instructions given to me yesterday at my discharge. The pop was the root cause when I felt what was a stitch coming loose or skin tearing on Monday. By itself it was nothing and in a week or so would have healed and never been noticed again by me. As fate has a strange way of allowing or causing things to happen that I doubt I or any of us will ever know in this lifetime, it instead became instrumental in this story. Three days later, when the cat came out, the clock started ticking for real when, unbeknownst to me, urine began leaking into my abdomen through this spot where the urethra had been reattached to the bladder after the prostate removal.

At this point, we reach lesson #1 for anyone following this tale in order to be more prepared for the procedure I had. If you have surgery, listen to your body while it ~~was~~<sup>is</sup> healing and let your specialist know if you think you injured something. I don't know if a CT scan would have found this at that time, but I did not know what had been done in the detail that I should have until after the follow up, which again due to fate or whatever you want to call it had conspired to interfere due to my choices rather than allowing things to happen normally, causing the appointment to be made nearly 2½ weeks after the surgery instead of the normal week after. This was caused by my delay ~~due~~ in scheduling the surgery until the week before Dr Hale's 2 week vacation, a decision I will call my own stupidity and caused by my flippant attitude toward the procedure. And under normal circumstances, it would have never been an issue, but again, there is nothing normal about this

tale, so why expect it now? Just wait, it gets so much better. And all of it may be a series of coincidences that I am interpreting completely wrong, but it has sealed my belief and I will continue to write as if it were merely another Divine intervention and having written it once, will no longer mention it and allow you, dear Reader, to interpret as you choose. The Lord truly works in mysterious ways and I am in no place to choose argue nor will I attempt to.

Back to the story. I took a pill on the way home because even though it was to be taken with food, I had eaten before going to the VA. By the time I got home, the side effects had begun - nausea, being the one it started with. 100mg of Nitrofurantoin twice a day for 10 days, the medicine that made this story possible. The only other one is headaches, but they only happened a couple of times and were insignificant. ~~Saturday~~ ~~was~~ Friday was a painful day, but by Saturday the pain had subsided significantly. The only other pain pill I took was on the day after the surgery and Friday after getting the antibiotic for the UTI for a total of 3 due to my avoidance of them mentioned previously, my appetite had been curbed by the nausea however, and played an instrumental part in this as well, yet another link in the chain of events and the next lesson for those of you searching for them. Listen to your body and give it what it needs to heal and function properly - food, rest, etc. you know what you need to do, now do it. Tick tock, tick tock. By Sunday the pain was almost gone from the UTI but I still had no appetite. I missed the things my body was telling me and pushed on. Mistake #3 and a big one.

I got six hours of straight sleep last night, but an

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still a touch groggy and seemed to have skipped an important part. Friday afternoon, I had called the Dr Hale's office concerned that I hadn't <sup>pooped</sup> ~~pooped~~ yet after having the cat removed. I left a message with the office and Lisa was using her skills (which would play some very important parts in this) to get an on-call doc to call me back at the same time. When he did, we talked and I told him the symptoms and what I had done and he agreed with my ~~VA~~ VA doc that I was doing good and said if I hadn't by Saturday or Sunday to go to the ER. He also said he would pass the message to Dr Hale, who later told me that without the CT scans we were doing the right thing. He advised stool softeners to assist, so I did and by Saturday had crapped. So when the pain had subsided by Sunday I thought the worst was over. Tick tock, tick tock. Monday sometime, the diarrhea set in. By this time, I had only been able to eat food in small amounts but stayed hydrated as best I could by stopping coffee over the weekend and drinking my normal half-gallon of distilled water daily and a little more.

I had also began drinking at least one and sometimes 2 ensures or boosts for the vitamins I knew I needed but were missing with the reduced food intake. On Tuesday, I made what would become another near fatal mistake by taking an imodium to stop the runs, which had by this time left my remaining hemorrhoids distended and almost the size of my fist, adding to my discomfort. Since Saturday, my nights consisted of at least two trips to the bathroom with gas pain and I was losing energy and sleep. I had been calling my sister occasionally for advice also, just to make sure I wasn't messing up like I generally do when left to my own devices without all the information, as in this case.

My follow up with Dr Hale was set for 8:45 on Monday. The 21st 18 days after the surgery and 8 days after the cat removal started the clock ticking, but everything was functioning that they told me to look out for so I wasn't worried. I should've been. Tick tock, tick tock.

Wednesday was when the pain came back and didn't leave. I had about a half cup of long grain rice with ~~chicken~~ chicken broth for lunch because Lisa, another angel, loves me and had been the linchpin in the health story. It was delicious, but left my stomach bloated and painful, so I took a <sup>small</sup> crip and it helped, but not much. I called Dr Hale's office and the nurse said it sounded like I ~~may~~ may have a blockage and advised Miralax. I took that and ~~by~~ by the next day had bowel movements again, but took it until Saturday. Friday came after 3 overnight trips to the bathroom had me drained, mentally and physically, but with several things which would turn out to be vital. For that, I need to once again step back and give a brief bit of background so that I can connect the physical with the spiritual without sounding like a complete idiot. Forgive me, but this text is not only divinely inspired, it is written at the end of an exhausting and exhilarating journey and I had to get it down before losing the details. In the written work which may or may not follow it will be much more polished.

As I mentioned briefly, I have been on a search for my path. I found it in the days before the procedure and made the statement "It works but you have to open yourself completely, release and immerse yourself to make it happen." It turns out that's the truth as it was revealed to me, but I'm not allowed to write about that. That is personal between you and your belief, not mine. It also

turns out that I'm hard headed and don't take hints well. Lisa told me just a bit ago that when she was sitting on the toilet the day before the VTI started while I still thought everything was fine, that a thought popped into her head to get out a box of rosaries that her grandma left her and give one to me. She said the thought was weird because the rosary was the closest thing she had to compare to last rites. I let one choose me and learned the prayers and read the history of it for over three hours, almost driven. I didn't learn the Apostle's creed at the end and already knew the Lord's prayer and Glory be to our Father. It would prove to be my salvation, again, totally unknown to anyone. From the time I got it, it never left my side until the mortal danger had past, except for the few showers I took over the 3 weeks. It was in my pocket, wrapped around my hand, being prayed with, or around my neck constantly. The thing that gave it the power for me was the delerium I had begun to slip into had given me the proper mindset. I had a brief vision earlier explaining the one wrong mindset I had inadvertently brought with me that came close to killing me last night had I not worn my rosary, but I have rectified that and have no further fear.

Looking back with the newfound clarity and exhilaration at the experience it leaves me elated. At the time it should have been terrifying, but when I released and gave it up, they guided me and wow. But that's mine. That is where I was and you can see the rest of the story through the eyes I had if you try.

Having said the rosary each of the 3 time I was up on Thursday, by this time I had it down to a chant. I didn't miss a beat, not a slip of a word, perfect. All except the

Apostle's creed. Friday I spent sitting up, not really watching the shows that were on, Lisa at the end of her rope, her literal wit's end and I recall her saying that she had done all she could to keep me alive, that it's up to me now. I got some food to stay down, I hadn't started puking yet, but the thought of it nauseated me and I had no appetite. I was still drinking the boosts for vitamins, and I think it helped, but there's no way to tell. It had only been 8 days of urine leaking into my abdomen causing all of this, but I didn't know that. I was tough, could handle a little pain as long as it all works. But it was broke as hell. Tick Tock. Tick Tock.

Bedtime! Finally, maybe an hour straight. Nope. Five trips. Well, while you're here, mind's right, grab the rosary. Ah. That's it, better - relief - respite. Thank you Thank you. Damn, I really need to learn the Apostle's creed after that follow up Monday. Just let me make it to Monday. I don't know why, or rather, yes I do, now. At the time, in my delirium, I was certain of myself. I don't know when I went septic, but at that point it didn't really matter, at least the when. Saturday brought with it a fresh new torture - puking. I think that was when we watched 'One flew over the cuckoo's nest' that I grabbed a boost. I couldn't slam it, but when I finished, it didn't sit right. About an hour later, I almost didn't make it up stairs to my toilet. I held it in my mouth in the doorway and fortunately, as fate would have it, the lid was set up and I emptied the boost with no mess whatsoever. Also, I now know it was divine inspiration that caused the sudden toilet disinfector on Thursday in preparation for noon.

Well, while you're here, head right, rosary, yep. You got time for one. What else ya gonna do? Again, calming, filled with peace. I don't know why I didn't make the connection now that it's so obvious. I was messed up had I guess. To me, it was n't that serious, yet. After puking 4 times that night with almost no sleep, I got scared. That's when reality hit, Sunday morning - 10 days after the leak started. I had been so exhausted by this point I had to take 2 breaks to get through a shower Saturday night - and that was just before the puking started.

Still, I didn't want to bother Lisa, so I dozed in the chair til she got up. After she woke up (we have a routine and she has to let her meds work) I told her I may need to go. That's when she said "It's about time. I've been saying that for days". It took a few to get the animals settled and fed, then out. I had to get my bag, so went upstairs. The bed was comfortable, so I had to lie down. Lisa came to get me 4 or 5 times, but I could not move, too comfortable right then. Then a voice in my head snapped and said get up. I forced myself to sit up and staggered down the stairs. We were going to go in the car, but I said to call 911. I walked into the squad and they put me on the bed and we headed out to meet some Angels. Some worked there, some were there for me.

I watched Lisa as she followed in the car and chatted with Sam as we rode on. She's young, compassionate, and good at her job. I wish her all the best in her life with her "ready made family" and have no doubts she will be happy. Stay safe and God be with you. When we got there, it was pretty crowded as I had expected. Sam left me in the

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Sat 10:30

hallway sitting in a wheelchair and went back to work, another angel. They inprocessed me and my vitals were ok so I went back out to sit. About a half hour later, she came and got me and took some blood, telling me it will be ready in about a half hour. 45 minutes later I got a room, then another angel put a catheter in. She apologized that she had no numbing lube, explaining that it was on back order. Lisa had arrived when I got a room, seemingly walking in as I was texting her.

From here until the visions, things may jump around because I am writing of Sunday on Wednesday afternoon, and you've read of the events up 'til then. I was hazy to say the absolute least, but will use it for clarity.

I hardly felt the tube when she inserted it and attached the bag. They took an ultrasound and pronounced me around 8 months but found no heartbeat, so I fear the worst. But seriously, she said it was full of fluid and they couldn't tell what. They took me to CT, then back briefly to wait on a bed. I think about a half hour later I was off to SICU and Lisa was home. She asked for a thumbs up and got one and a smile. Cool plc.

That's where I met Kelley, the first SICU angel. She got the vein that took, the only one that day, around 3:15 pm my arrival time. I was in good spirits, waiting on Mergan to call, scared I wouldn't be able to talk for some reason. We chatted about my conversion, talked about the rosary for a bit - all while she was saving my life and I still did not know how serious I was. I don't, or didn't at the time but do now, know why, but it was important that I connected with her and the rest of the angels I was to meet. But, true to form, I did and then they tried to get another needle. I cannot recall who other than



Kelley tried several times and failed before giving up. I tried as best I could to listen to them when the doc came in with the numbers and CT Scan. I recall them ordering 4 or 5 liters of 3 different fluids, 3 or 4 different IV antibiotics and more. Then Morgan called and I told him I had gotten dehydrated and would be fine. We cut it short and he was worried but not bad and would be fine. Until shift change at 7, we had spent about an hour chatting while she was working and I told her about my recent conversion and Morgan. I said the rosary a time or two and she apologized for interrupting once. That's when I told her it wasn't, it was an angel doing her job saving my life, bless her soul.

I lost some time then, the only hour of true sleep I got the whole time. I woke to meet Brittany, the next SICU angel, whom I got to chat with throughout the evening and into the wee morning hours. They each had 2 rooms and checked our stats every hour, I had labs every 2, but fortunately, they got it out of the same IV and it held the entire time. They said that's why they get 2, because one always fails. Not mine. I told them they didn't need it and was right. I did not know how close the Angels were until that night. I had been unable to sleep but whenever I closed my eyes I would see lots and lots of people, different scenes, like movie scenes and I was a walking camera. All that and it was still before midnight and I was trying to get comfortable. Looking back now, it seems strange that I perceived something like that as normal at the time, but it was somehow and somehow I know that's right.

Then the visions started for real. I can't go into any of it or even tell you how I was to know it, but I digress. In the morning I met Bob, angel B in SICU. Keep in mind the

order is when we met, not capability. This is especially true here, because Bob has 28 years of experience and is good. I ~~also~~ told him about Morgan and my conversion and learned of his son's issue and knew, sensed, the fatherly worry. So I prayed and we didn't chat a lot. Dr Hale came in for our follow up and told me what happened, about the leak and all. He said that when people come in with this, they have about this much fluid and say it's excruciating - holding his hands in about a 3 inches apart at the fingers. Then he said - "you come in with a full ~~bladder~~ abdomen - it must be terrible." He also said I wouldn't have made it much longer and they were gonna drain it when Dr Deem, his partner, could fit me in. Then, the kidney specialist came in.

We had watched a Mel Brooks documentary during the delirium at some point and I really enjoyed it. I love that guy. As I was trying to doze, I heard what I thought was someone doing an impression of him in the hallway. I was annoyed that it had interrupted a sleep attempt. But, since the Lord doesn't really care what we prefer when he sends angels our way to save us, it turned out to be the kidney specialist, another master of one that I was badly in need of. Apparently, I was making pretty good progress at this point, because after I learned that it was not an impression and he was from Indra, he examined me and said let's wait and see, About a half hour later he returned and said he had talked with Dr Hale and they agreed to wait since the labs were improving. Then we chatted another minute or two and I thanked him and he left just as lunch was arriving.

The first food I had in about 2 weeks of any substance was 3 full courses with dessert and I had it down in about 10 minutes flat. Bob looked at it and joked that I left a piece of a carrot.

I told him I must've missed that and to hand it over so I could finish it and he laughed. After the kidney doc left he had walked me down the hall and sat me in the chair before lunch, I forgot that part until I looked at my texts looking for a pic of that meal. I didn't think of pics until the next meal.

Dr Deem and his team came to get me to drain the fluid about 10 minutes after I finished lunch. Nobody had told him they changed their minds. He ~~took~~ <sup>took</sup> a quick look and asked if it hurt. I told him no, for the first time in a while. He seemed surprised at how it looked. He told me later that when he saw the CT scan on Sunday, he thought one of them would have to re-do the surgery. Bob was worried and I could sense it, so instead of chatting, I prayed for him and his son. There was an elderly gentleman down the hall who seemed to have dementia and took bouts of yelling for Emily in a wailing, mournful loud voice. Rather than annoy me, it saddened me and made me want to try and ease his pain and comfort him. I finally asked if he was alright and Bob told me that in elderly folks you have to be careful that what you use to help them doesn't hurt them. I asked if they had a chapel in the building and wondered if a rosary wouldn't help comfort him as it was with me. He told me that he couldn't have anything in his hands for safety so I said I'd pray for him instead. That's when I told him I would ~~had been~~ <sup>and thanked me</sup> praying for him and his son and he smiled. That was shortly before shift change.

Whenever it got near, they would come and tell me who the next angel would be and that they were really good. Bob introduced John, SICU angel # 4, that way. John is a highly intelligent, compassionate nurse who I learned was 2

years of experience, which surprised me after hearing ~~his~~ knowledge. We talked a lot that evening, and that night I found out why they thought I was sleeping. The BP went off while I was ~~doing~~ <sup>saying</sup> my rosary and it was 125/87 with 82 pulse. I had been lying there aware of everything around me with my eyes closed resting, praying, hallucinating, and they thought I was sleeping. There were a few times one would come in and I didn't say hi at least. Most of those I was aware of. About 3am I pointed out the BP to John while I was talking to him and how no wonder they thought I slept. He seemed amazed at the time, but it's hard to tell what was real from those nights. The one thing that I do know is that I am Damned glad I had the faith so that I could let go of my fear while walking that valley of Death or I would not be here right now. Of that I will never doubt and that alone seals my belief. They say me not let go of the rosary and they heard every word of every prayer and pointed the way through. That is all I am ever going to write about that, unless given permission, of course, Jesus' will be done, Amen

I couldn't wait to hear how Bob's son was, although I know he's good, and Bob did look relieved when he arrived - even though he hadn't talked to him. That morning my belly was down at least two more inches and I was feeling so much better. I knew I'd be in the hospital at least another day, but I didn't need the SICU angels any longer, they had others to save. That was yesterday morning and it seems like last week already. They put me on the floor that morning. Shortly after breakfast to room 589 where I met a few more angels, although for a much briefer period of time. Janet, Heidi, and Angelita. Lisa was coming to visit today and I had just got taken to the room by Bob in a wheel chair, who wished me the

best and went back to save another poor soul. I finally was unhooked from the O<sub>2</sub> monitor and BP cuff, with only the cat, IV, and chest leads attached. I saw the sink in the corner of the room and remembered I needed to brush my teeth. I was just getting ready to walk down the hallway when Mr Brooks walked in with his team. He was amazed that I was up and around and how far I had come overnight, so he told me to follow him to get rid of the IV. We found Heidi right down the hall who disconnected me and I was free of all of it, cat in hand and heart monitor in my pocket. I walked around some more until lunch and had spaghetti and green beans, which I now love.

I always hated green beans, but made sure to make Morgan eat his and he loves them. That is until meal #2 in SICU which had them. I hardly hesitated before inhaling them and fell in love almost immediately. Strange ways of the Lord indeed. I talked to Heidi and asked if I could stay the night since I tend to overdo things and she said it should be no problem since I just got there, then Lisa came.

I didn't stop talking, not realizing how much I had missed her. Shortly after ~~she~~ she got there, Heidi came in and said when she told them I wanted to stay they had already discharged me. Guess I'm better, great. I needed paper prescriptions for the VA, so it took a while. I ended up reading the discharge papers and then decided to come to grips just how close I had been to death. I got scared then, first time since I got there and I was headed home, better. It was taking a while, so Lisa took most of the stuff down while I put on the walking cat bag and got dressed, waiting on the prescriptions. After I got the bag changed, before I put

pants on, I pulled out the rosary, got on my knees at the foot of the bed I had not yet been in and said the rosary. Perfect mind, humble gratitude, total exhaustion - mental and physical - and the vision came! Beautiful this time and I didn't finish the rosary but stopped and gave thanks in prayer and again surrendered my soul to Jesus. Later that night I was warned of some mistakes I had made and they have been rectified. I got dressed and walked down to the car.

Through a series of delays, I was introduced to the last angel of this story by Lisa, after my colossal screw up at the VA pharmacy. As we got to the closed clinic through my sleep deprived communications coupled with the delays, Dr Troy Sommerville was leaving his office. Lisa called him over and asked if he could help as I was getting off the phone realizing my mistake. She asked if he could help us get the meds I needed and he said it would take a bit but yes and we went into his office as Lisa waited in the car. He looked up the info and called the prescription in to the pharmacy as I was amazed at the flow chart on his wall in colored sticky notes.

It turns out that he is implementing a new plan to help vets with urinary problems, like mine with a call in program. After clinic hours in order to avoid an ER visit, the vet will talk to an LPN who will be able to call in prescriptions to a pharmacy to get fast help. I'm sure there is more to it than that, but again, it had been a wild ride. I plan on holding on to this feeling as long as I can. Thank you for reading. Good luck on your journey, fellow traveller. May the Lord bless you and guide you. Amen.

~~Diagnosis severe~~

Diagnosis: Severe sepsis, Acute hyponatremia, Hyponatremia, AKI - acute kidney injury, acute renal failure, abdominal pain generalized, Nausea, vomiting, acute dehydration, hyperkalemia, post surgical complication, sepsis,

A Journey I will never forget.