



Lifelines

The Respect Life Committee at St. Francis is an Apostolate that is totally committed to defending the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death.
www.stfrancisparish.org/respectlife.htm

St. Francis of Assisi
 Respect Life Committee

May 2009

The "Miracle Patient"

an interview with Mr. Alan Levy (parishioner) by David Mello

The Respect Life Committee at St. Francis proudly proclaims and defends the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death. Mr. Alan Levy came incredibly close to his natural death in late 2006 but was saved by the supernatural and he thanks God every day for the precious gift of his life; a life he can continue to share with his wife, Lorraine, their three children, and their grandchildren.

Diabetes; neuropathy; bullous pemphigoid; pneumonia; heart attack; cauterization; Bakers Cyst; Sepsis Infection; coma; angioplasty; cardiac defibrillator. These medical conditions and procedures are hard to pronounce, but imagine battling them all and, by God's grace, living to tell about it. With deep faith and a profound respect for life, Alan recounted his dramatic near-death experience to me the other night as I sat spellbound

and speechless.

Alan had been suffering with diabetes and neuropathy for years and in the Summer of 2005 contracted bullous pemphigoid, a rare disease that affects 3 in 1,000,000 people. After initially struggling to accept his suffering, Alan eventually came to understand that he was being asked by the Lord to participate in his suffering and he realized what an honor and privilege it was to suffer for Christ. In November, 2006, however, Alan's health problems multiplied at an alarming rate. He was having problems breathing and contacted his doctor. He was diagnosed with Pneumonia but still felt ill after a couple of weeks. After an EKG and a Stress Test, Alan learned that he had had a heart attack. He was admitted to

the hospital for a heart cauterization which revealed so many blockages that the procedure was stopped so the doctors at the UVA Medical Center could confer about how he should be treated. The next procedure was a Cardiac MRI which led the cardiologists to recommend Alan for angioplasty and a stint the week following Thanksgiving. Unfortunately, Alan's body couldn't wait that long.

Alan was rushed to the Augusta Medical Center (AMC) ER the day after Thanksgiving with a 104.9°F fever. At AMC, Alan was found to have a Bakers Cyst in his right knee in addition to a Sepsis infection. After slipping into a coma, the doctors told Lorraine that they could not save him. He was given a less than 5% chance of survival. Alan was airlifted to Roanoke Memorial Hospital and remained in a coma for about two

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**Next Respect Life
 Committee Meeting:**

**Sun. May 24th 10-11:15
 St. Clare House Kitchen**

St. Gerard's Column

**Congratulations to
 the Hornbergers —
 Mary delivered a
 healthy baby boy,
 Jimmy, April 13th!**

Please pray for these
 expectant moms:

Heather Glymph
 (due with twins in Aug)
Analia Anniballi
 (due Sep)
Noreen Brennan

Please pray for all moms
 who recently have
 experienced the loss of their
 unborn child.

Please pray for the intentions
 of women who desire
 the gift of motherhood but
 are experiencing the pain of
 infertility including:

Gertrude*
Mary Street Moore

Contact Monica Wirth at
 886-6644 to add someone to
 the St. Gerard prayer list.



weeks. After coming out of the coma, Alan was sent to rehabilitation/physical therapy to strengthen himself in preparation for heart surgery.

After more than a month of physical therapy Alan was about to be discharged but again fell into a coma. After coming out again, he had to repeat his rehabilitation and finally, about a month later had an Angioplasty with a stint. In August 2007 he had a Cardiac Defibrillator implanted.

The doctors all said he shouldn't be alive and that they didn't save him, medically speaking. They called him their "Miracle Patient". Alan believes he was the Divine Physician's miracle patient. He is absolutely certain of God's hand in his recovery. When asked why he thinks God saved his life he responded, "I really don't know. He must have more work for me to do." Inspired by the many St. Francis priests and parishioners who supported Alan and his family during his ordeal, he feels called to the

Corporal Works of Mercy, particularly visiting the sick. He said he feels privileged to do it.

I asked Alan how his outlook on life has changed since his illness and recovery. He said he relives his experience every day. Each morning he wakes up and says, "Thank God I am alive!" He also looks at pictures of himself and his family from his hospital stays and treasures them greatly.

As I spoke with Alan about his family and his life I sensed the intense love he has for his wife, children, grandchildren, and friends. He shared with me that when he was a young boy he lost three of his grandparents in five weeks time. He told me how much he wanted to live for his grandchildren so they would have their "Opa" (German for grandfather).

Alan also impressed upon me how indebted he is to so many dear people at St. Francis for their prayers and visits during his sickness. He mentioned them all to me by name (several times) but I have chosen to not single any of them out. You know who you are.

More importantly, God knows who you are --- the doctor who helped Alan get a diagnosis and treatment for his bullous pemphigoid disease; the doctor who went to Alan at home to speak to him about his grave condition; the nurses at AMC who helped care for Alan when he was first admitted into the ER; the priests who visited Alan at AMC and in Roanoke and anointed him with the Sacrament of Healing; the parishioner who visited Alan day after day for weeks; the parishioners who helped Alan with modifications to his home upon his return from the hospital. Your acts of Christian Charity speak volumes in affirming the sacredness of each and every human life. Always remember to make time each day to thank God for his blessings, principally for the gift of life. Also, when life seems crazy or you feel you've lost your way and don't understand what God's will is for your life, just think "I really don't know. He must have more work for me to do...."

Respect Life Garden Update

Bids are coming in and we have received the "Certificate of Appropriateness" required by the City of Staunton.

Next steps are final approval by the diocese and selection of the winning contractor.

Thank you again to our generous benefactors who are making this project possible.

If you are interested in donating to the garden it is not too late!



Happy Mother's Day!

To all mothers: birth mothers, adoptive mothers, grandmothers, godmothers, foster mothers, mothers at heart, those who wish to be mothers, and spiritual mothers may God bless you richly for your great love and many sacrifices.