

DECEMBER 10, 2023: 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



By now I'm sure you've heard about my motorcycle accident that happened on Friday, November 17. And I am truly grateful to so many people who helped me throughout that ordeal, beginning with those who were at the scene of the accident: the New Boston Police officer and the ambulance and paramedic team. Then, the staff at the Elliot Hospital in Manchester—the surgeon, nurses, techs, and so forth—did a great job of providing the care I needed. Unfortunately, I was not in a position to remember all those involved. Finally, there was my sister Anne, who came to the hospital and did not leave until after the surgery was over and I was in my room. The support I received

from so many people was truly a gift.

I am also grateful for the support I am now receiving from my awesome staff, wonderful parishioners, deacons, and brother priests. And I am *not* someone who receives help easily. Being forced into some level of confinement definitely goes against my personality traits; as most of you know, I am a doer. I work hard and play hard, and so being in a situation where I am forced to remain inactive goes against the grain. But God is definitely pouring his graces into my heart: I am finding the patience so far to deal with this. I will not try to rush my recovery. I recognize and understand that my body will need whatever time it takes to heal. And with the support I am receiving—and know I will continue to receive—that is very doable. I must say, though, a special 'thank you' to Fr. Fernando. As a community we are truly blessed by his presence. But, as his pastor, I am doubly blessed to be able to work with someone who cares for these communities as much as I do. His work ethic is outstanding, and his compassion, support, and level-headedness are a real comfort for me. I know that while I am recuperating, our communities are in great hands. It is truly a great blessing to know that I need not worry about how things will transpire.

As I contemplate all that has happened over the last few weeks, I feel a deep sense of gratitude to God. I have no doubt that things could have gone very differently. The moment the crash occurred I simply started praying and giving thanks to God. I felt an overwhelming sense of God's reassuring presence in that moment. As I was taken away by ambulance, I knew I was in good hands with the people who were caring for me, and that God was going to be with me throughout whatever happened. I will admit that, because of the amount of pain I was feeling, I was using language while in the ambulance that was uncharacteristic of what I would normally say in front of other people. I kept apologizing and they would just laugh at me and tell me it was okay. But, another thing I did say was how glad I was that I had just gone to confession that day. When I got to the hospital, I was a little more composed and started saying 'fudge' when the pain got to be too much. At the same time, when they had to move me for various reasons, I would yell in pain, and then apologize. Even in a situation like this, I do not like to be the cause of people feeling bad. But, through it all, the hospital staff was incredible and they reassured me that it was not a problem. The greatest gift through all of this was that I was still able to pray and to keep my focus on where it needed to be—on God. Before I was about to be taken into surgery, I asked my sister for my iPhone so that I could pray the evening prayer that I pray every day in the Liturgy of the Hours, and it gave me great comfort and support to face whatever was coming.

In that moment, I truly came to both realize and demonstrate what I always tell other people to do: believe in the power of prayer, focusing on God; staying true to the faith can get us through anything. Moreover, it is a great way to think about the Season of Advent which we have now entered.

Advent is not simply about preparing for Christmas. It is about learning to live our lives in the perpetual anticipation of seeing Jesus Christ, as was proclaimed in the Collect at Mass today: "Almighty and merciful God, may no earthly undertaking hinder those who set out in haste to meet your Son, but may our learning of heavenly wisdom gain us admittance to his company." Our life as Christians is *not* one of fear of coming face to face with Jesus, but of hope. Our deepest desire should be the moment we will be embraced fully by Christ. In fact, we must be like Mary, who set out in haste to visit Elizabeth when she heard about her pregnancy. Mary did not allow her own pregnancy to stop her from witnessing God's promise fulfilled to Elizabeth.

Advent is a time to prepare our hearts and lives to be one with Christ. We do that quite frankly by making prayer, confession, Mass, and all the other spiritual gifts God offers to us a priority in our lives. In my time of need I could turn to those gifts in a powerful way because they are so naturally a part of my life. Let us seek to make haste this Advent to *truly* be ready to meet Jesus in our lives. Let us use the great gifts He has given us to help make that happen, particularly prayer, confession, the Eucharist, and the scriptures. I know it has made a difference in my life and I know it can make a difference in yours as well.

If you have any questions about anything, please do not hesitate to call/text me at (978) 254-0560.
If you prefer to email, please visit <https://theholyrood.org/email-fr-brian>.

Please keep me in your prayers.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Fr. Brian".