

Gift, sharing, creation, redemption, and service found in hospital work.

The year 2007 has meant two separate five day stays in two different hospitals. But the time in the hospital has meant something more. I learned to truly esteem work as a gift and a sharing in the creation, redemption, and service of the human community. And, it was not the work I did, but the work of the workers in the hospital, especially immigrants.

My first journey to a hospital this year was in March for lower back surgery. What was projected as a one or two day stop, turned into five days. Reducing my level of pain and getting up from bed and walking were challenges that took some time.

I remember my surgeon who came to the United States from Thailand. He is a Christian who prayed with my family and me before surgery. That relaxed me before going into the operating room. Plus he had my Tau Cross and Brown Scapular placed in a plastic container and they were with me when I was in my room.

There were the wonderful nurses, and nursing assistants, and techs from

many countries. I remember the Philippines, Mexico, El Salvador who took blood, my vital signs, gave me medicine, made me comfortable, and emptied the urinal because I not could get to the bathroom because I was too weak and I was attached to machines, IVs, etc.

When I am in the hospital, I often ask where the doctor, nurse, assistant, tech is from. And, I welcome them to the United States and thank them for taking such good care of me and other patients.

Oh, yes I have had doctors, nurses, and nursing assistants pray with me and for me. I made it through some rough nights a lot better because a nurse or nurse's assistant prayed with me before I tried to sleep.

And, one night, a nursing assistant and I talked about Corinthians and that discussion relaxed me.

Well, about a month after surgery and at home had some other problems—unexpected and very serious. Blood clots in legs and lungs sent me in an Aid Truck to another hospital for five more days. Once more, I saw God's presence in many who cared for me and other patients so well.

The emergency room doctor from the Philippines and the doctor from an Eastern European country with the name I could never pronounce correctly. She inspired such confidence and I felt so good about her advice.

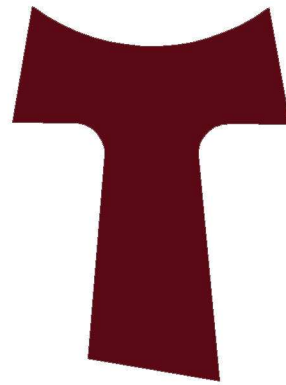
There were many more. The young man from the Congo would awake me at four o'clock in the morning to take blood. The first morning he had to poke several times to find a good vein. Next time, he made it on the first try. I felt that he was as concerned as I was about avoiding any pain.

The nurse from Mexico who listened to my limited Spanish and told me she had once been a member of the Catholic parish I now attend.

There are many more wonderful health care professions who I have come to know by their work as a gift to health care, to me and other patients, and who do share in creation, redemption and service to the human community. God bless them and the work they do!

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Article 16*



Health

Care

Gift