

October 30, 2022

Waxahachie, TX

Dear Praying Family and Friends,

I'm now just a month out from the last PET scan I reported to you in the last update. That one was "clear," which means that the scanning equipment was unable to identify any "colonies" of lymphoma in my body. From long and sad experiences in the past, of course, my oncologist will not declare victory at this point. But, for now, this result is certainly better than any other result! Meanwhile, at my last clinic visit, there continued to be NO evidence of cancer.

What now?

I report to the clinic for blood work every two weeks now. This is done for two reasons:

- To monitor my immune system, so that I receive any useful therapies to facilitate this part of my recovery; and,
- To look for any "signals" in the lab results which point to a recurrence of the lymphoma.

As I said, there are no signals, and three times I received infusions of intravenous immune globulin. Intravenous immune globulin ("IVIG") is a product made up of **antibodies** prepared from the blood donated by thousands of people, to make a super-concentrated and very diverse collection of antibodies against many possible infectious organisms I might encounter. As my own immune system recovers its own ability to generate antibodies, these IVIG infusions will not be needed.

However, one result of the CAR-T therapy (also a result of stem cell transplants), is that all my previous immunities from vaccinations have vanished! In another couple of months, I will begin to receive once more *all my previous vaccinations*, most of which were administered to me 50+ years ago! Measles, mumps, diphtheria, polio, smallpox, and so forth - all these will need to be done again when my own body can produce its own antibodies again.

And, so, I'm in a period of rebuilding my immune system as well as rebuilding my overall fitness.

Here's a photo of me as I'm engaged in the latter project!



As my strength and stamina have steadily grown in the past weeks, I've set out to accomplish small carpentry projects that capitalize on my growing stamina. Previously I made a spice rack for our kitchen. In the photo, I'm working on frames for a wall display in my home office.

Simple gardening projects are another way to exercise my body and my recovering “chemo brain.” I’ve also taken up writing and communication projects such as editing a much-needed update and improvement of *Five Aspects of Man*, a theology of manhood. That draft revision is now in the hands of 50 men who are reading it to give me feedback on ways to fine-tune it. I am also tinkering with a new blog at Substack which I hope I’ll “go live” with by New Year.

Both Barbara and I feel a growing sense of responsibility to all of you and also to our Lord, to husband the days ahead of us so that they are fruitful for our Father's Kingdom. This morning Barbara remarked to me that these days of recovery (for us both!) are days which we earlier wondered if we would ever see at all.

The beginning of 2022 looked very bleak. The lymphoma was charging forward with alarming speed and power, both Barbara and I came down with COVID in mid-January which brought all cancer therapy to a halt for a month. Participation in a clinical trial raised hopes which were then dashed as a PET scan showed that the cancer was growing much faster than the drug could beat back. In June of this year when we would throw the most powerful weapon in our oncologist's arsenal at this cancer. But at my age and with the cancer so advanced, it was a risky therapy.

As 2022 is beginning to wind down, however, it appears (for now) that period of recovery stretches out before us. What shall we do with it? How shall we be good stewards of the gift of life given to us by the kindness of our Heavenly Father Who has heard all your prayers for us and granted them?

Please ask our Father to grant us wisdom, insight, and skill concerning opportunities for ministry going forward. Our Lord knows what lies ahead; we do not. That's what it means for Him to be our Shepherd, and for us to be His sheep. Pray that His rod and His staff will comfort and guide us in the days ahead.

The next PET scan is already scheduled for December 14. And, as we pass milestones along the way, I'll keep you posted with updates!

Much love in Him,

Fr. Bill Mouser