

A Story of Hope in Sickness

Rose was dying of cancer in the hospital. A famous oncologist came into her room with three interns. “This patient,” the doctor began before continuing with his diagnosis. Having finished his talk, the doctor started to leave the room, when Rose said, “May I have a word please.” “Yes, my dear,” the doctor replied.

“My name is Rose, not a patient without a name. I am dying of cancer, but I am at peace without bitterness. If I had lived 2000 years ago, I would have gone to Jesus and asked for a cure. But today we have research, doctors, and pharmaceuticals. I trust in their skills. But we are human and will not live forever. It is my faith that keeps me going. I do not feel isolated or lonely. I enjoy the peace and quiet – and I wish you doctors-to-be all the success in your endeavours. God bless you all.” Rose winked at them and closed her eyes.

Reflection

On this Monday in the First Week of Advent, we ponder on the virtue of hope in time of sickness and perhaps even in death. The Gospel story is that of the centurion who comes to Jesus with the hope that Jesus will cure his servant. His hope is fulfilled.

Rose’s hope was based on two things. First, she had a deep faith in Jesus Christ. That hope gave her courage and even peace on days when she was in severe pain, on days when the inevitability of death would cause another to be fearful.

The second reason for her hope was her self-awareness that she was a unique, “one-of-a-kind” image of the living God. It made her bold enough to assert that she was not a patient with no name, lying on the bed to be probed and prodded by doctors and interns. She was Rose. She was loved by God. This deep conviction upheld her as evening

came bringing its darkness. There were no relatives or friends to be with her through the night.

In chapter 4 Isaiah declares that “the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious.” Rose and the rest of us are branches on the vine that is Christ.

Question to ponder

In our story Rose shared with the doctor that it was her faith that kept her going during her time of suffering. She shared that she did not feel isolated or lonely but enjoyed peace and quiet.

Reflect on a time when you faced sickness or loss (your own or that of a loved one). What role did your faith play in how you dealt with these difficult times?