

Dear Friends,

During this Lenten season, as a parish, we will continue to explore the Jubilee Year theme of being Pilgrims of Hope. Each Sunday, we will share stories from our parishioners about the power of prayer and the hope such power proclaims. I trust you will enjoy them.

Peace,
Fr. Damian



Terri Caffrey

When the request came for Stories of Hope/Answered Prayer, the first one that came to mind was my sister. It's been a long time since I've thought of it, and an even longer time since it happened, but you could also say it's still happening...

When my sister was 16, she started having vague, chronic complaints, which included a low-grade fever and aching joints. She saw several doctors and eventually was diagnosed with SLE (Systemic Lupus Erythematosus). Back then, it was likely a fatal diagnosis. I remember everyone was praying for her. Mom and Dad said rosary after rosary and novena after novena for her. I don't think we, her siblings, understood the severity of everything. Based on lab reports and biopsies, they guesstimated she had 10% of her kidney function remaining. They were trying different modes of treatment and placed her on high-dose steroids. She ended up in a Steroid Psychosis and on suicide precautions--not so much because she wanted to kill herself, but because her mind was so twisted she thought we were all dead and she wanted to join us. They had to taper the drugs down slowly. Prayers continued...She came out of the Psychosis once they got below 1/2 the dosage they'd been giving her. Now how to treat her? At another conference with various physicians, they decided to try giving her Cytoxan, an anti-cancer drug. She ended up with her mouth and esophagus ulcerated and her white blood cell count so low they had to put her in reverse isolation to prevent her from getting any infections. The novenas continued...They reached a point where they felt they had gained as much as they would from the Cytoxan and stopped it. As she improved, we all dared to hope. It looked like she was going into remission! Praise the Lord God Almighty! Prayers of petition changed to prayers of thanksgiving! She not only went into remission, she has stayed there for over 50 years! She's been off all meds for the SLE for quite some time. Kidney function has remained good. We are so grateful to God that He answered prayers and healed our sister.



Jamie Halverson

In July 2022, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I was 36 years old and 18 weeks pregnant. My husband and I had a 2-year-old at home, and I recently had a miscarriage. The hope we had for this little one that I was carrying was immense. When I heard that I had cancer, my only thought was "will our baby be ok?". The doctors were fairly certain that she would be, but the fear of losing her was all-consuming.

I went on to have surgery and several chemotherapy treatments while pregnant, constantly praying for the health of our baby. Our beautiful little girl, Evelyn, was born in December 2022. I felt so much relief having her safely in our arms, and out of my body that had been taken over by cancer treatment. After her birth, I had more surgeries and more chemotherapy treatments. In May 2023, my doctor told me that I was cancer-free. While that was incredible to hear, my moment of hope came when Evelyn was born. She was here; she was safe. And what a beautiful image of hope she was to us!

During this time, I was absolutely amazed with the community that surrounded me with love and care. Several parishioners dropped off food, offered to help with my children, and prayed continuously for me. I received the sacrament of "Anointing of the Sick" from Fr. Damian during Mass. Seeing everyone raise their arms to bless me made me feel that I was wrapped in love. My experience gave me so much hope that, even in the hard times, your community is everything.