

# Cancer experience brings signs from God

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In almost every religious education class or Catholic school, as children and young adults are being formed in their faith and coming to know God, the topic of “signs from God” arises. These signs can be events that seem to be a coincidence, a person that is put into our lives or even something as small as hearing an uplifting song at just the right time.

I think I speak for a lot of people my age when I say that I haven’t recognized too many obvious signs from God in my life. Of course, it takes prayer and discernment to truly understand what God is trying to convey to us, and it is by no means easy.

Personally, the biggest series of signals from God have come within the last seven months or so. In particular, the people I have met have made an incredible impact on me. I was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma last September, after about a week of not being able to breathe while lying flat.

She began to pray and did not stop until the toughest part of the procedure, about 30 minutes, was over.

Unbeknownst to me at the time, this was due to a sizable tumor in my chest constricting my airways by more than half. After some preliminary blood work, other tests and a CT scan, I was sent to Arkansas Children’s Hospital in Little Rock to determine what was wrong. My first three nights ever spent in a hospital were spent in the Pediatric ICU.

As our lives went into slow motion, the signs from God started to present themselves.

After my first sleepless night in the hospital, I was taken back for a biopsy and the insertion of a PICC line in my arm. This line was a long catheter that carried IV medicine directly to my heart. Due to my breathing constriction, I was not able to be anesthetized for this operation, only mildly sedated, but still awake and aware of everything that was going on.

I could feel the line being placed in my arm and the needle that was digging in my chest and taking samples of tissue for further testing. That two-and-a-half-hour operation is one of the scariest things I’ve ever experienced, and ironically enough, this is when the most obvious sign from God occurred.

Every so often, I would have to verbally communicate with one of my anesthesiologists to make sure I was doing alright. I fared well during the PICC line insertion, but as the surgeons started taking samples of tissue from my chest, I became much more anxious. My blood pressure began to rise and my breathing began to quicken.

When my anesthesiologist came to check on me, she asked if she could pray with me to calm me down, not knowing if I even believed in God at all. I said yes, and she began to pray and did not stop until the toughest part of the procedure, about 30 minutes, was over.

Almost immediately, my blood pressure dropped back into normal range, and I did not need any more sedation for the rest of the operation. The entire procedure should have taken around 45 minutes to complete, but it took over two hours due to the constriction caused by

the mass in my chest.

Obviously, God meant for my doctor and me to be in the same operating room that day. This is the most obvious sign from God that I can remember experiencing, and it led to an even greater friendship lasting far beyond that day.

Every few days after the biopsy, my anesthesiologist would stop by my room to sit and talk with me and my family. We got to know her well, and she shared with us the trials she was experiencing in her own life. We kept in touch throughout the months to come as I was in and out of the hospital. After about five months, I received the results of a PET scan Jan. 13, indicating that I was cancer-free. When I told her the news, she let me know that she had miraculously overcome the struggles she was experiencing in her own life as well.

We were both healed, and she was a sign from God letting me know that he was with me, even in the most stressful and trying times. As it says in Joshua 1:9, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

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