

# THE PASTOR'S POST

## WHAT TO DO WHILE WAITING

Dear Parish Family:

On Tuesday, I needed to visit someone in a hospital in Suffolk County. They are from our parish and were in a terrible work related accident. By God's grace, they are alive and on the road to recovery. The hospital is big and complicated. The receptionist asked me if I knew where I was going. Of course I do. (I didn't.) Like many hospitals, more sections have been added so finding the unit was not easy and I was a little stubborn to ask for directions. As I was in the Emergency Room - NOT where I was supposed to be - a woman called out to me. She was with her daughter. *Are you a priest?* "Yes, what...you think I'm a boring dresser?", I responded. She smiled. She asked if I could anoint her husband but he was in for a CT scan. *Can you wait?* I said I would come back after seeing the person I was being led to see.



There was a part of me that was filled with a little frustration. I had to get back for the parish mission (which has been awesome). This is not my assignment. I wanted to say, "They have a chaplain. They'll help you." It was just a long day.

After visiting I came back to the emergency room and found the woman sitting alone. She was waiting for me. Her husband was taken for another test. *You can go. I understand.* She gave me the out but something called me to stay.

So I sat next to her in the waiting room. I met a saint. She told me about her husband and their marriage of nearly 70 years. We (she and I) are from the same town on Long Island but she and her husband were from Brooklyn - St. Fortunata. *Father, you have to go. Don't stay here. We'll be OK.* They met and moved to West Islip. Four kids, all retired. Grandkids galore (with a picture or two to show me from her purse - in a ziploc bag to keep it protected of course) and with a great smile...a great grandchild on the way.

The Catholic Church and her faith is so important to her. From Brooklyn to St. Joseph's to St. Mary's, they were very involved. Of course, she asked where I was from. I told her St. Brigid's. *That's far, Father, you need to go home.* So I bragged a bit too. I

shared about the amazing people and ministries here. I told her about the communities, the languages, the needs, the Masses. *I always heard about St. Brigid's.* I know, I know! Everyone has!

*We do not go any more. We're older now. It's hard for us.* She shared about a religious sister who brings communion each week. *She's an angel. We need the Eucharist.* I happen to know that same religious sister. Sister Betty is an angel! As we were talking her phone rang. It was an Iphone. *My kids bought it for me because they want to know where I am all the time. I can't stand it. I talk on the house phone.* Her husband was in another department and was waiting for the test. It would be a while. *Father, you need to go. I am going to sit in the emergency room now.*

I asked where the test was taking place. I promised I would see him. *You don't have to. Thank you for spending time with me.* So...I went. I got lost a few times and was back in the emergency room. A doctor saw me and walked me to the radiology department. More waiting. I met her daughter. We talked a bit about her parents and their journey. *I'm retired now. I am glad I can be here for them.* Me too, I thought.

I finally met John. I said with a smile, "You were lost but now are found" as I told him about my hospital journey. *I pray everyday, Father.* I asked him to add me to his list. He agreed. We celebrated the Anointing of the Sick. *Thank you, Father.* No, thank you!

I recall listening to someone speak about today's Gospel - it may have been a homily of Pope Francis. He said imagine this Father on his front porch every day. Waiting. Looking. Hoping. Longing.

What did he do while he was waiting? I imagine he received a number of signs and consolations that told him to keep waiting, looking, hoping, longing. You'll see his return!

What do you do while you're waiting? Take some time to slow down, embrace the moment, and hope. Like me, you just might meet a saint.

Please pray for me. I promise the same.

*Father John*

