

MEMORIAL EDITION

Facing Cancer With God's Help

A Personal Journey

Jeanne Carol
Martin



Liguori

LIGUORI PUBLICATIONS

Liguori Publications © 2014 All rights reserved.

Liguori.org • 800-325-9521

Imprimi Potest:
Harry Grile, CSsR, Provincial
Denver Province, The Redemptorists

Published by Liguori Publications
Liguori, Missouri 63057

To order, visit Liguori.org or call 800-325-9521.

Copyright © 2014 Jeanne Carol Martin

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior written permission of Liguori Publications.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Martin, Jeanne Carol.

Facing cancer with God's help : a personal journey / Jeanne Carol Martin
—Memorial Edition.

pages cm

1. Martin, Jeanne Carol. 2. Cancer—Patients—Religious life. 3. Cancer—Patients—Biography. 4. Catholics—Religious life. I. Title.

BV4910.33.M37 2014

248.8'61969940092—dc23

2014031280

p ISBN: 978-0-7648-2491-3

e ISBN: 978-0-7648-6937-2

Scripture quotations are from *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Liguori Publications, a nonprofit corporation, is an apostolate of The Redemptorists. To learn more about The Redemptorists, visit Redemptorists.com.

Printed in the United States of America

18 17 16 15 14 / 5 4 3 2 1

First Edition

Liguori Publications © 2014 All rights reserved.

Liguori.org • 800-325-9521

Contents



Prologue	5
1. Reaching for God	11
2. Healing Through the Eucharist	17
3. God's Love Relieves Our Misery	25
4. What if...Looking for Signs of an Afterlife	33
5. Understanding God's Role in Our Suffering	43
6. Finding Value in Suffering	51
7. Connecting Through Prayer	60
8. The Healing Hand of God	69
9. God Reaches Out	75
10. Feeling as if Time Is Running Out...	
Peace Is My Gift to You	81
Jeanne's Epilogue	93
Linda's Epilogue	97
Appendix A: Prayers for Healing and Hope	103
Appendix B: Recommended Books	110

Dedicated to
Our Mother of Perpetual Help



For surely I know the plans
I have for you, says the LORD,
plans for your welfare
and not for harm, to give you
a future with hope.

JEREMIAH 29:11





– Chapter Two –

Healing Through the Eucharist



Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life.
Whoever comes to me will never be hungry,
and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

JOHN 6:35

One morning, I was running late for the 8 a.m. Mass, and pulled into the parking lot to see about twice as many cars as usual for a Tuesday. I wondered if I had forgotten some special feast day. By the time I parked and got out of the car, I had decided that it was a normal weekday morning. I had no idea why the extra cars were there. Perhaps the school had early parent meetings. As I walked briskly toward the back door of church, I met another latecomer. I smiled a greeting and said off-handedly, “They must be giving something away today.”

I zipped into church, and took a back pew just in time to hear the homily. Then it hit me. They are “giving something away” in here—Jesus, himself. Each of us sitting quietly in our pews, all spaced apart for personal devotion, were in church for the purpose of receiving Jesus, and to bring him our troubles and joys. We were at Mass to receive our free gift—the person of Jesus in holy Communion. If all those people sitting in rush-hour traffic outside really understood what was taking place in here, the church would be packed. Here I was, day after day, conscious of the wonderful gift I was receiving. The Eucharist, Jesus’ Body and Blood, offers me hope, healing, strength, courage, and peace. And it’s free to all who come.

I had come to Mass that day to beg and plead with God to help me with my cancer recurrence. The Gospel that day was the story of the woman with a hemorrhage. Jesus was traveling with the disciples to a synagogue leader’s house to attend to his little girl who was ill.

Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. She had

endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?"

And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'"

He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

MARK 5:25–34

I immediately identified with this poor woman. It had been twelve years since my original diagnosis of kidney cancer in 1984. The woman in the Scripture was afflicted for twelve years and had no healing from the doctors. I, too, had consulted many doctors since my original diagnosis. She longed to touch Jesus' cloak to be cured. I was here at Mass, longing to touch Jesus and be healed. As I followed the people in line for Communion, I pictured

myself being just like the woman with the hemorrhage, inching herself through the crowd in order to reach Jesus. This was even better than touching Jesus' cloak. I was actually touching Jesus, himself. I raised my hands as the priest offered me the Body of Christ. "Amen., I believe." As I took the host, I knew Jesus was as close to me as the woman who saw Jesus face to face. The power and gift of the Eucharist overwhelmed me.

My personal treatment plan includes daily Mass. It is equally as important as nutrition, supplements, exercise, or immune therapy. However, this component treats more than my cancer. Receiving Jesus in the Eucharist heals my soul, my spirit, and my mind. I believe that each time I receive Communion, Jesus takes my physical and emotional pain and allows me to be free of the burden. "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases" (Matthew 8:17). As Jesus becomes a part of me, my thoughts turn to wondering how anything harmful, like cancer, could possibly live in a vessel filled with holiness and God himself. And I am filled with hope.

At Mass, I listen to the Word of God proclaimed in the Scriptures, and allow God to touch my heart. The prayers speak to my brokenness and humility. "Lord, have mercy on me." I join my prayers with those who share their brokenness and need for healing during the petitions. There is someone with lupus, a man whose spouse has cancer, another person has just been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. A woman behind me just lost her husband, a man across the aisle lost his job, someone's grandchild is sick, another has a son who left home. We are all broken and come to the table of the Lord to be

touched and healed. I am not alone.

The Eucharist celebrates Jesus' victory over death. "Dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life. Lord Jesus, come in glory." I need to hear that death is not the end. I need to know that my life will go on. The Eucharist reminds me that Jesus, too, suffered and died an early death. No matter how deep my suffering, I know that with Jesus' help I can experience a part of his rising.

"Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed." This is my prayer as I receive Jesus. I pray that I will be healed of my weaknesses, my sins, and my cancer. As I wait my turn in the line for Communion, I pray the prayer *Anima Christi*.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.

Body of Christ, save me.

Blood of Christ, inebriate me

["give me joy for living each day"].

Water from the side of Christ, wash me

["wash me clean of my weaknesses and cancer"].

Passion of Christ, strengthen me

["to fight this battle"].

Good Jesus, hear me.

Within your wounds hide me.

Never permit me to be separated from you.

From the evil one protect me.

At the hour of my death,

call me and bid me come to you.

That with your saints I may praise you

forever and ever.

Amen.

I sit quietly and reverently with my eyes closed after Communion. I imagine and pray that the Body and Blood of Jesus will become one with my body and blood. I pray that it is Jesus' blood that beats through my heart, bringing wholeness and healing to all my good cells. I pray that Jesus will prevent any blood supply from reaching the cancer cells. I picture the blood flow throughout my body, in all my veins and arteries, having healing power because it is Jesus' divine blood. This is a healing visualization that makes sense to me, scientifically and spiritually.

The Mass is my refuge. It is the memorial of Jesus' death. I am welcomed to come and eat, and to take the body of Jesus that has been given up for me. I am invited to come and drink and take the blood of Jesus that was shed for me so that my sins may be forgiven. Jesus loved me so much that he gave his life for me. That compassionate divine love is extended to me each day through the Eucharist, the Real Presence of Jesus.



“I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

JOHN 6:48–51

*Lord Jesus Christ,
Thank you for being present to me today
just as you were present to your apostles
and disciples two thousand years ago.
Oh Lord, when I am hurting and broken,
I need your healing touch to comfort me
and heal me. I come to you in the Eucharist to
receive your Body and Blood. I pray that your
Body and Blood become a part of my body,
strengthening me in my fight against cancer,
bringing me peace and comfort, and healing me
of my disease.
Amen.*

