

## Witnessing of Faith By Fay Lenz

Good Morning,

I have been a member of St. Mary community for 48 years.

I have been married to my wonderful husband Rick for 52 years and he has made God real to me through his love, support and actions almost every day. We had 6 boys and now have wonderful daughter in laws and 5 beautiful grandchildren.

Today I would like to share with you some of my faith journey. Although God is a part of my everyday life it has been in moments of joy and sorrow that I have strongly felt His presence.

When I was 16 yrs old my mom died of breast cancer. A few weeks later i was talking with my Dad and telling him how I did not believe in God anymore. How could a God allow this to happen to us? My Dad quietly told me that he did not understand why this had happened but that he chose to believe in God and to look to Him for strength and support. My dad went on to say that I would have to make my own decision about the path I wanted to follow as I moved on with my life. I thought about this for awhile and made a conscious decision to chose God.

There have been other times in my life when I have reached a fork in the road and had to consciously make that same decision again.

When our son Danny was diagnosed with intellectual and developmental disabilities and we were told he may never walk or talk I needed to step back and question again. I am a good catholic girl I thought How can this be happening to us? God once again sent people into my life to show me the way. Starting with Rick who believed that Danny was a gift from God. When I let go of my fear I was able to see what Rick was talking about. Dan does not judge or say unkind things about anyone. He has shown me how to be more Christ like in my actions and words.

Danny has also shown me how to accept others who are different and to see God's presence in everyone. He truly has been a joyful gift from God.

When our son David died at the age of 15 I didn't think I would be able to move on with my life. Once again God showed his love and support through others. Only this time it was more like an army of people. Our family, friends, neighbors, and parishioners here at St. Mary's church and school.

God lifted me up and carried me through all of you. I felt his love through your hugs, your simple words of kindness, and your actions.

Mostly God revealed himself through David's own words in a poem he wrote about a near death experience he had before he actually died. In the last verse he says:

But if I see the bright light shining  
I'll know I'm with God, and you'll see I'll start crying  
I'll be full of joy  
And laughter and all  
And I know I'm there forever  
And never will fall.

Recently I dealt with a couple of health issues that required surgery. On both occasions I received the sacrament of the sick from Fr. Matera at daily mass. Again God's Spirit was felt by me through Father and through those of you who were present and raised your hand in blessing and prayer. I carried that with me into the surgeries.

I even asked my surgeons to read a prayer I had written for the operation. Both Doctors agreed and I peacefully went to sleep assured of God's protection and healing power. Every thing turned out great!

Finally I want to thank all of you here at St. Mary's for the continuous examples of your faith in God. You have made my faith journey stronger through your prayers and actions. I feel privileged to be a part of this beautiful community.

Recently I dealt with a couple of health issues that required surgery. at St. Francis Hospital. On both occasions I received the sacrament of the sick from Fr. Matera after a daily 8 am mass. Again God's spirit was felt by me through Fr. and through those of you who were present and raised your hands in blessing and prayer. I carried that with me into the surgeries.

I even asked my surgeons if they would read a prayer I had written when I was in the operating room. I am getting bolder in a quiet way with sharing my faith with others that I don't know well. Both Doctors agreed to do it. In fact the second surgeon actually had the whole surgical team say the prayer as i peacefully went to sleep assured of God's protection and healing power. Everything turned out great!

Finally I want to thank all of you here at St. Mary's faith community for your continuous examples of faith in God. You have made my faith journey stronger through your prayers and actions. I feel privileged to be a part of this beautiful community.