

Timely health intervention pays off

You read in the *Catholic Courier* last week the news that on Jan. 23 I underwent an angioplasty procedure during which two stents were placed in my coronary arteries.

This week I want to tell you that I am feeling very well, and have returned to a regular work schedule.

I also want to say a word of thanks to the doctors, other medical personnel and the support staff, who were so generous in their care of me. I stand in great admiration of their skill, dedication and compassion.

My sincere gratitude goes as well to all of you who have been praying for me, and to all who sent me cards or other forms of greetings. I have written before of my conviction that prayer has rich healing power. Your generous kindness throughout this recent experience has taken that belief to an even deeper level.

You may be interested in a couple of pieces of information about the procedure and what led to it:



Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Along the Way

First, I had a similar experience in October of 1998 and have kept in close touch with my physician so that he could be sure that my condition was properly monitored.

Part of the monitoring was a nuclear stress test I took on Dec. 31. The reading from that test indicated that there might be blockage in my coronary arteries. On Jan. 21, in pursuit of that concern, I had an angiogram, which made it clear that I

needed the angioplasty done two days later.

Second, I had no detectable physical symptoms at all that indicated I was having problems — shortness of breath, pain or tightness in arm, chest or jaw. I live a fairly active life, which regularly includes aerobic and resistance workouts. Even during the stress test I felt no pain or discomfort, nor did I feel unduly fatigued by it. I was quite surprised by the findings, but am deeply grateful that the problem was identified and treated successfully before I experienced some greater difficulty.

For those who, like me, worry about whether a particular medical procedure will hurt or not, I am happy to say that this one did not hurt at all — before, during or after the procedure. The very worst of the discomfort was an occasional needle puncture, the need to be in one position for an extended period and the sting of a bandage forceful-

ly separated from flesh. Even for a chicken like me, these were no more than mildly irritating.

So, in addition to thanking you for your healing gifts of prayer and friendship, I want to offer a word of encouragement to any of you who may allow fear of the unknown to keep you from keeping a close watch on your health.

From my limited personal experience and from all I read, it is not a good idea to ignore medical concerns. Early detection raises the possibility of effective treatment. The medical profession can do wonders in the control and management of pain.

I am not a doctor, and I certainly do not wish to intrude in your life. But, I think that my words of thanks for your generous support would be less than I would want them to be if I did not encourage you to be good stewards of the precious gift of your health.

Peace to all.

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