

Today is my great uncle's birthday. Today he's 92. That's TWICE my age. (I'll let you figure the rest with math.) Roughly FOUR times the age of a graduating college student; and about EIGHT times the age of the students in my Tuesday evening seventh and eighth grade class.

Now, when I tell people my great uncle's age, they usually say something like "Wow!" Or else they make a face that says "wow" without saying anything. Then I tell them that his sister is two years older than he is.

And, two years ago, Uncle Joe had half-a-dozen strokes; and lay in a hospital on his death bed. Nobody expected him to live. But, by God's grace, he did.

Not only was he "on his death bed" two years ago ... but yesterday, I sat across the table from him at Pizzarrina Uno while he ate a bacon cheese burger, and he talked about the years when he was in the service – during the second world war.

He's driving. He owns a silver Firebird Trans Am. I'd have to say, he's doing quite well. In fact, he and his sister are moving to a new apartment next month ... and they're both pretty excited about it.

On the other hand, tonight, after mass, we're having a benefit dinner for a young family – the father of which died a little over a month ago, leaving behind a wife, and three young kids.

If any one of us were to hear that we had only a month to live – how would we change the way we lived? If any one of us were told we had an incurable illness, or a terminal illness – how would we change the way we lived our lives?

Think about that for a second.

And if we were in the position of having a terminal illness, and someone came along and offered us the cure – how much money would we give him?

Think about that.

And if that person offered the cure for free – how would that make us feel?

Today in the first reading, Job carries on about how "life ... is a drudgery." He talks about "months of misery," and "troubled nights."

Job, is one depressing guy today.

Yet we know that at the end of the story, EVERYTHING that Job has lost that brings him to this point, the point we hear about in today's reading ... is restored to him ... and then some.

We all have a terminal illness. Brought on by sin ... we will all die. None of us know when. We may live beyond 90 plus years, tooling around in a silver Trans Am ... or we may leave a young family. But somehow, some day, we are all going to succumb to the terminal illness that is the condition of all life.

When I asked, what would you change if you were told you had a terminal illness – what came to mind?

And, guess what, there is a cure and it's free – Jesus Christ has come and cured that terminal illness. And at the end of time, when the dead rise from their graves ... we will all be united with EVERYONE from all time in the presence of God in eternity.

In the Gospel, we hear about Jesus curing Simon's mother-in-law of a fever. Very few other details are given – was it terminal? Was it a head cold. Yet, in gratitude for being healed, Peter's mother-in-law returns hospitality and waits on the Jesus and the disciples.

And after that, Jesus cured “many who were sick.”

The next morning, the disciples go looking for Jesus, and tell him “Everyone is looking for you.”

So, the point: We all have a ‘terminal illness.’ We all are offered the ‘cure’ free of charge. What do we do with this information? What do we do about it?

St. Paul made himself the servant of all so as to spread the Good News free of charge.

How do we express our gratitude to God, to Christ, for the priceless cure for our terminal illness? Are we looking for Christ like the people in the Gospel? Are we willing to sacrifice to speak about the Gospel?

Our inheritance as daughters and sons of God in Christ is ETERNAL LIFE. How does that change how we do things today? How should that how we do things today?

One of the primary gifts of the Holy Spirit is JOY! Life is NOT a drudgery – or at least it's not supposed to be. And when it *does* seem to be a drudgery, most likely it is because our focus has moved from God in Christ to something lesser.

So, today, as sons and daughters of God, in Christ, and filled with the Holy Spirit – let us claim our inheritance. Let us live our lives redeemed in Christ. If that means that we stop trying to save ourselves and accept the saving power of Christ – then so be it. If that means we make some changes in how we do things, then OK.

But let us resolve, as the children of God, redeemed in Christ, and endowed with the Spiritual gifts to live each day relying on those gifts.