

April 21, 2010

Dear Family and Friends,

It is springtime and I've been able to get outside and walk around in the sun. Central Texas weather is close to perfect this time of year. Of course, that won't last, but while it does, I'm enjoying it.

The weeks that stretch between Christmas and Easter are, for me, the hardest in here. Both holidays remind me of the past, when my girls were young and for better or worse, we were all together. I remember so well the keen anticipation reflected in their eyes on Christmas morning before presents were opened, or how they'd make endless trips to the window to peer outside, trying to get a glimpse of Santa Claus, or the Easter Bunny. I miss those days so much as I'm sure my girls do too. I didn't know at the time, how swiftly they'd pass or how abruptly one's life can be snatched away and replaced by mere survival.

Most of the time I can put those memories away and live in the present, where the day to day challenges are sufficient to keep me busy. And yet the holidays have a kind of emotional power that can one moment be a comfort and the next moment cruel. You see here, we are defined not so much by what we have or what we are, but by what we no longer have, and whom we no longer seem to be.

I can't fathom anyone making it through this process of waiting without faith, without a relationship with God. From the depths of anguish, anxiety and depression, God's love alone is often the only thing that keeps me going. During Holy week I felt such a close affinity with Christ, who, as we know, was without sin, but put on the human form and experienced every temptation, every emotion, every pain and doubt and fear that we feel. Somehow Christ loved us so much that he died so we'd have eternal life and at times my heart swells with gratitude for that sacrifice, even as that same heart breaks because of it.

Prisons are designed to cause suffering and death row is especially barren of any type of comfort. It's not enough to sentence one to die. The State requires you to be as uncomfortable and uncomfoted as possible as you wait. So it is with trepidation that one first approaches God to implore Him to make bearable what the State attempts to make as unbearable as it can.

Not too long ago I read the writings of St. Paul, who was no stranger to prison and like the Messiah he followed, died a convicted felon. Paul wrote:

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness," (2 Cor 12:9)

He further said,

"...in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body, that is, "the church". (Col. 1:24)

Which is to say that the negative effects of living on death row cannot be ignored or diminished, but through God's grace, these days can be transformed as a means of redemptive suffering.

I'm far from an expert on the subject of faith but having been here this long, I can say without a doubt that I'd not have made it thus far without it. That my daughters, and sisters and brothers "out there" have helped me tremendously is an understatement. Through their witness, their prayers, their generosity, their very presence and their unmitigated belief in me, that widows's mite of faith I had upon coming to death row has increased a hundred times a hundred fold.

And now let share a miracle with you.

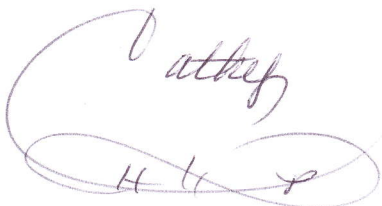
My best friend Karen Dailey was able to bring my daughter Jennifer to see me during Lent. I can't express the joy I felt as I listened to Jennifer tell me about Aaliyah, our little miracle baby! Jennifer herself, was a miracle baby. But, that's another story for another time. As some of you know, Aaliyah was born prematurely and had significant medical difficulties which necessitated immediate surgery. Within minutes of her birth she was air-lifted to Dell's Children's Hospital so surgeons could connect her esophagus to her stomach. I was terrified of the thought of such major surgery, but the procedure allowed the surgeon to do his job and barely leave a scar. Aaliyah faces additional surgery to correct her thumb, so please keep our baby in your prayers.

Before I close I need to ask all of you another big favor. If you're not already praying for Judge Wisser, please start. Even though my life may hang in the balance of the decision this man will eventually make, I believe that it behooves us to consider the awesome weight of responsibility that he must bear. I know the difference prayer has made in my life, and it can make a huge difference in his, as well.

The legal work and research, the presentations, testimony and reports presented by specialists and all the infinite details that have had to be attended to have been carefully and lovingly accomplished by Fred List, George, Amy, Molly, Michael and Joe. I am grateful to them and ask you to remember them in your prayers as well. The list goes on and on, and among those I consider Saints is Sister Helen Prejean, who has made such a difference in my life, along with Rose Vines and many, many more. Please remember them in your prayers as well.

In closing for now, I want to thank each of you for walking with me along this journey. We're not there yet. There remains a distance yet to go. Let us travel together the rest of the way in hope, in faith and in peace!

Love, hugs, and prayers,



Kathy