

# Terminally Well



**Sandy Greggs**

On August 15, 2014 I was told that I had a terminal illness and was instructed to get my affairs in order. Wow! Not what I was hoping to hear. I wasn't even sick. Granted, I was having trouble with my voice, but they were treating me for allergies in North Carolina where I had moved from 4 months earlier.

I managed to hold it together until I reached the parking lot and then I lost it. Big time. I was reeling because I had been diagnosed with ALS, a disease in which certain nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord slowly die making it difficult to walk, speak, eat, swallow and breathe. I was also told that I had 18 months to live. You do the math, but I'm still here.

When I was finally able to pull myself together, something deep inside of me told me I was going to be okay with this and that I had what it took to endure. That something was my Catholic faith which has always told me that God was with me—no matter what—and that He wasn't going to bail out during the storm that was howling through my life.

I suppose I could have opted for self-pity and given up. I could have moved to one of the 5 states or to DC that permits assisted suicide and ended it all

without suffering, but I chose not to take either one of those roads. Our world is filled with lies and those who spread them for their own gain. I'm sure you've heard the death peddlers spread their propaganda. They taunt us with their words, "Why suffer? There's an easier way out." But is it really? They toy with our fears, "Your family will be better off financially." I think the price of one's soul is too high a price to pay in the long run. They play to our insecurities, "You don't want to become a burden do you?" I've weighed in on the evidence and concluded I have a 50/50 chance of becoming a blessing instead.

I guess that I'm way too curious to let the purveyor of lies pitch their wares to me. No, I want to see how it all is going to work out. So far it hasn't been bad. I'm never sick and not in any pain. Of course I can't speak, but I use a speech generating device to communicate with. I do have trouble walking, but I have a walker, a power wheel chair that goes faster than I ever did and a transport chair when others take me places. It all boils down to perspective. If I thought ALS was horrible then it would be. I choose to look at it as an inconvenience. As time passes we all make concessions.

The terminally ill still have opportunities. Since my diagnosis I've made new friends. I live independently and happily. And a dream has been fulfilled that I carried in my heart for many years—to evangelize. Through the use of technology I spread the love of God and His mercy to people all over the world on a podcast that's called Catholic Vitamins (we offer nourishment to the soul). I do the same on Catholic radio station KPIH out of Payson, Az., I contribute to a monthly Catholic newsletter and now I'm here.

We all have choices and we all come with an expiration date. How sad it would be not to live the lives that God has graciously given us to the very end. Life is, above all, a gift that we are to use to bring Him glory, to serve Him with all our hearts and to love His people. Don't give in to the lies of the world and don't give up. Always remember that He will never forsake us, that we live in the palm of His hand and that Jesus made us family members when He died on the cross for us and for our sins.

Sandy Greggs is a new Sacred Heart Parishioner who describes herself:

"I'm a Catholic, Christian woman who loves the Lord and her faith. One thing I've discovered is that the Lord is meant to be shared and not hoarded away like Grandmas fine china. He's not

exclusive to me. No, he wants to be shouted from the rooftops. That's especially hard for me since I'm unable to speak. But when he calls, he also equips. So not a problem. I'm adventurous. I moved to Wilmington, NC in 2004, a year after my husband died and took my 95 year old mother with me. I didn't know a soul there. I also lived briefly in Payson, AZ. where I made friends that later helped my evangelization efforts. I love to laugh and always look for the brighter side of things and truly believe that the joy of the Lord is my strength. I've attended Sacred Heart for several months and recently joined the parish. I have been warmed by the hospitality shown me. I look forward to meeting you and hope you will be open to share your faith with me."

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