

July 13, 2011

***In Christ alone my hope is found,  
He is my light, my strength, my song;  
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground,  
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.***  
Words and music by Keith Getty and Stuart Townsend

Dear Friends,

We want to write you to let you know of a very heavy burden we have been carrying for the past six months. In January of this year, David was diagnosed with very early stage Alzheimer's Disease. It has been a season of change, evaluation, mourning and deep prayer for us as we discover God's direction for us and adjust to what we are calling the "New Normal" of our life together and our vocation as Priests.

When Dave was diagnosed, we let our family know, and then met with our Bishop, Jon Bruno. After sharing this difficult news, we received his unqualified support, love and encouragement. Some of our dearest and closest friends have known since January, but we were not ready to share about his illness with our wider community till now.

Regarding his actual diagnosis; we are very pleased to have an excellent physician who is considered "cutting edge" in the field of Alzheimer's diagnosis and treatment. Over the past six months, Dave has been taking a variety of medications, both prescription and homeopathic. His condition has stabilized and there has been some modest improvement in his cognition. His doctor has said that he can continue "indefinitely" at this level. When we asked him what that meant, he said Dave will probably live a relatively normal life without the disease progressing. Obviously, that is our hope and prayer. Still, he struggles with short-term memory loss and his speech and communication skills have suffered somewhat. He is still able to drive, dress himself, cook some great food, enjoy working in the garden and serve as a priest. His Physician *and* Bishop Bruno have been very clear: they want him to continue to work as long as he is able. Working is good for his brain, spirit and sense of self-worth. Being connected to others is a high priority. Thus, we are very intentional about spending time with our family and dear friends and desire to continue serving God in His Church. We pray that, as our Christian community, you will continue to support us in our ministry and hold us up through prayer, understanding and the incredible love you have always shared with us.

The practical concerns are that Karen is carrying all of the administrative and much of the pastoral burdens for two churches. While every effort is being made to 'be present', serving God in both places, we are aware that on occasion, we drop the ball. This is an area where we both need your prayers. Please intercede for us and hold up our ministry so that we can effectively serve in our two congregations, St. Clare of Assisi in Rancho Cucamonga and St. Peter's in Rialto. We have just recently shared Dave's diagnosis with them.

How can you help? Pray for us. Continue to love us, which you do so well. Communicate with us regularly! We love you and want to honor our Lord in our service as priests and in our many graced friendships which we treasure beyond what words can express. Most of all, seek to serve our Lord in all that you do and join us in the hope that is only available through our gracious God.

In Christ Alone,

Dave and Karen