

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

—1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God.

—Philemon 1:4

FRIDAY IN HOLY WEEK, MARCH 25

Not many months ago I took an unplanned retreat: four months in a hospital bed, my own 4-by-8 hermitage. At first prayer did not come easily or at all, from my end at least. But I was very aware of all the prayer without ceasing. As I started to heal, I would fix my eyes on an Ethiopian cross in my room and breathe, in and out, and eventually start thanking God for all who were praying in action and word.

The prayers that came easiest were the long lists of thank you and thank God for all who had a hand in my healing: my loving wife and children, parents and siblings, extended family, friends, my parish and diocesan family, colleagues and partners at Episcopal Relief & Development, surgeons, nurses, aides, therapists, administrators, chaplains, cleaners, countless people known and unknown, near and far off. The list does not end. Their actions and words were the healing prayers that saved my life and helped me see life in a new way. Now when I feel tired and spiritually depleted, I pull out my list and say thank you and thank God for all.

—**Brian Sellers-Petersen**