

Areas For Reaching Out

By Fr. Bob McDonald

“What can we dialogue about?” We have heard that question before. I have used it, innocently. I am not even aware that I hide a part of myself from everyone.

Dave & Ellie gave me a question today: **What are my feelings when I have to make a decision?** My first response was: “Nothing!” I just go ahead and make the decision, as Catalysts sometimes do, and see what happens. **Adventure!** Today it was different. I am faced with making a big decision. **Today!**

I don't want to share those feelings. Catalysts do not like to share feelings of anger and fear. We like to entertain. We want our audience to laugh.

I could go on and on with details of the many tests I have been through, describing funny and interesting things. I would hide my real feelings about the results, and the decision I must make, afraid you might pity me, see me as weak and incapable of serving you.

When we hide our feelings from each other, especially in difficult areas, we miss an opportunity to grow closer to each other. So instead of telling you about the tests and the results, I will share with you what I shared with Dave and Ellie.

Fear is certainly a part of what I am feeling. And some anger about helplessness in not knowing what to do. The fear is stronger. It is a seven on the 1-10 scale right now. It seems to increase when I allow myself to picture what the surgeon may do, and the consequences.

It is the kind of fear that I encounter in dreams, lost in some big building with many rooms and corridors, as in a hotel or college, and I cannot find my room. And I keep searching and searching. increasing the fear as the chance of finding my room diminishes. It is like heading out onto the highway knowing there are icy spots ahead, and snow is predicted. It is the feeling I sometimes have when entering a room filled with people whom I do not know.

A Fall picture of my fear is a darkening day in November, clouds streaking by, wind howling, leaves and branches tumbling in the dust, and people gone inside. It tastes like vinegar. It smells like rags burning. It is like leaving home with the nagging thought that I have forgotten something.

When I think of all of you praying for me, my fears disappear. Knowing that I am in the hands of a loving God, I have decided to have the surgeon explore and find out what is going on in there. There! I feel **great!**

I love you, **Fr. Bob McDonald, S.M.**

P.S. Thank you for your expression of love on my 85th birthday.