

Dear Family and Friends,

January 2010

Love and blessings from Jesus Christ be with you now and always.

I wish to leave you with a message, a message that is not too long or too “preachy” but yet a message that is meaningful to you.” After all, it’s only during the last 15 or so years of my life that I have come to have a closer relationship with our Lord, Jesus Christ. It was no epiphany like St. Paul had on the road to Damascus, but a gradual stronger and stronger closeness with Christ to where he has become a constant daily companion. So, I come not from a position of strength throughout the years, but as a grateful recipient of God’s persistent grace which finally took hold with good roots. Perhaps the best things I could share with you are some scripture passages, many of which reflect the Gospel rather than the law aspects of the scriptures. May these passages add purpose to your lives:

- For the Father so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever shall believe in him shall not perish but shall have eternal life. (We didn’t earn this.) ... The Father loves the Son and has placed all things in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. (Short pause)
- All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means “God is with us.” (Short pause)
- The Beatitudes:
 - Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 - Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
 - Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth.
 - Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be filled.
 - Blessed are the merciful for they will receive mercy.
 - Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God.
 - Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
 - Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 - Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven. (Short pause)
- “Pray then in this way:
 - ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.’ “ (Short pause)
- “Ask and it will be given you; search and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you.” (Short pause)

- “Come to me all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Short pause)
- “...whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many.” (Short pause)
- Then the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, before Abraham came to be, I am.” (Short pause)
- “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said...” ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself...’ “ (Short pause)
- “Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life and I will raise them up on the last day; ...Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me and I in them.” Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?” Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life.” (Short pause)
- While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples and said, “Take and eat; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks, he gave it to them saying, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” (Short pause)
- To St. Dismas, the “Good Thief,” at the crucifixion, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise. (Short pause)
- “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Short pause)
- And about three o’clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthanni?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”...Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. (Short pause)
- The next day...the Chief Priests and Pharisees gathered before Pilot and said, “Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ Therefore, command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away and tell the people, ‘He has been raised from

the dead...Pilot said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers; go make it as secure as you can." (Short pause)

- After the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised as he said. Come, see the place where he lay." (Short pause)
- Just before Jesus' ascension: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Short pause)
- Eye has not seen, nor has ear heard, nor has it even entered into the minds of men, what wonderful things God has prepared for those who love him. (Short pause)

And on a lighter note: I thank you dear Lord for the many blessings you have given me:

- I thank you for my life. When I was born, the life expectancy was about 60 years. You have given me more than that.
- Thank you for more than 75 years of good health, and fair health after that.
- Thank you for the gift of faith. This is the greatest gift you could ever give me
- Thank you for my vision; the fabulous design which provides near instantaneous views from near to far, all in three dimensional high definition and in color.
- Thank you for the ability to hear all the sounds of your creation, to be able to communicate with my fellow men, and to enjoy music.
- Thank you for the gift of smell, to be able to experience the aromas of food and flowers.
- Thank you for the gift of taste, to be able to experience the flavors of all the wonderful foods you have provided us.
- Thank you for the gift of touch, to be able to be able to relate in that way with ones we love, and to feel the warm garden soil on a spring day.
- Thank you for the planet you have provided as our home for our earthly stay. It is filled with wonders that intrigue and support us.
- Thank you for the solar design, which gives us energy from the sun, variety of day versus night, moonlight and starlight, a variety of temperatures, a variety of other creatures for our enjoyment and support.
- Thank you for allowing me an education that provided a career that was both rewarding and challenging.
- But mostly, Lord, I thank you for my family and my friends, of whom you know every feature. Lord, please continue to bless each and every one of them and bring them to know you better and better each day. (Short pause)

So, I come as a beggar, who never earned any of the good things our Lord has given me. He has lifted me up from the low places of life to become his friend and companion. Know this, that I am not just happy but joyously happy. My only regret is that I do miss Carolyn and really would have enjoyed more time with her. One of these years, she will join me and we will make up for a few years of separation. And that will last for a very long time. (Short pause)

Richard