

Where Bright Angels Lodge

My ordeal at Sanford Hospital would have been much worse were it not for the amazingly fine work of the nursing staff. On a weekend when most of the mainline staff is off, the patient with an emergency is often at the mercy of those who fill in on weekends, and this can mean trouble if that staff is not yet ready to deal with sudden developments.

Thankfully, I was blessed to have three of the most capable and uplifting nurses I have ever known. And I think of them as God's bright angels. I first encountered the term "Bright Angel" when I was a 4th grader visiting the Grand Canyon and coming with my parents to the "Bright Angel Lodge" on the north rim. Amazingly the name came to mind inspired by the almost heavenly countenances of those three amazing ladies.

The first, I believe, was put in charge of my case, and followed it from beginning to end. I think she was an RN and I'll discuss her last.

The second appeared around 1:00a.m. on the first night, when I was experiencing some very scary symptoms as my body tried to deal with the internal bleeding, which had only one way out and was causing me major un-ease. Nearly every hour the nurses had to tend to the truly distasteful task of emptying my bed pan and changing my always inadequate diaper. That would have made many "eww" types give up nursing completely.

But this did not deter Liseth. From the back she was very strongly built, almost like a Russian peasant. But that gave her the strength needed to put a big strap around my chest and pull me up on my feet when needed. Finally when she and her LPN helpers were finished, she looked at me. I was amazed at her beautiful eyes, sparkling with a truly spiritual light.

I said, “Good Lord you’ve got beautiful eyes. Only my wife and Mila Kunis have eyes that beautiful, but your voice seems almost Jamaican”. “It’s odd you should mention Mila, because she comes from my country, Ukraine.” Then we’re buddies, I said, we’ve supported Russian Harvest Ministries over there for a long time. Then she bent down and blessed me and vanished.

Then around 3:00 am another nurse appeared, also very strong and very Ivory Coast, her country. She did all the same stuff the other nurse did and then she bent down with her amazingly bright eyes and brilliant smile, spoke in a voice as high and pure as the piccolo in ‘The Stars and Stripes Forever.’ I could distinctly hear every word, “Do you need anything else?”

“Yes, more Jesus.” And laughing, she lit up even brighter, put her face down inches from mine and said, “Me too!” Then she too vanished. But she left me spiritually recharged. Then scriptures came to mind. “I shall not die, but live, to confess the goodness of God in the land of the living.” And “God is good, full of compassion and of great mercy...He will not leave you comfortless.”

Finally, toward morning, the nurse in charge of my case appeared and she looked at me with the kind of adoring eyes one often sees in groupies that follow some rock idol about. And she later told my daughter Lisa she had become a fan of mine, amazed at my positive attitude throughout the ordeal.

She said that where most others might be full of fear and moaning, your dad was making jokes, quoting scripture and even speaking in tongues. He’s someone I know I’ll never forget.”

This sweet lady was a native North Dakotan and also unforgettable. What she perhaps didn’t realize was that a mature Christian has no right to go into any battle, physical or spiritual, unarmed. I was blessed to be “armed and dangerous” with the name of Jesus, many positive scriptures and even the gift of tongues. The

same gift Paul used to endure the countless, beatings, stonings, shipwrecks, imprisonments, and persecutions he did and still come out alive.

So I'm still above ground, and looking back, thankful to have gained so much positive wisdom for dealing with impatience, my old nemesis, and to finally realize that even in these perilous times, there are places where "Bright Angels Lodge."

Gene Pinkney 23-04-16- For The Daily News