

RITE OF PASSAGE

Turning 50 can mean many things, and one of them is probably that no one should be able to boss you around anymore! But it's also that milestone age where it's highly recommended that you get your first colonoscopy. And I am going to boss you a little about that.

In early January, I went to the memorial service of a 53-year-old woman who had died of colon cancer. She waged a valiant three-year fight with this disease, and I heard that even though she was truly courageous it was an awful, awful ordeal.

An often preventable cancer, we do not want to fall victim due to fear of an examination.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Phil. 4:13

Last week, I had my test done; and I'm here to tell you—beyond how necessary it is—that with the right attitude you will sail right through it. But you have to prepare your mind as well as your body. Think uplifting thoughts!

"A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones." Proverbs 17:22

The next time I hear someone make some stupid joke about this test, I'm going to have a little conversation with them. Perhaps unwittingly, they're helping to scare so many people from doing the right thing—people who really have no idea what to believe.

So, you can't have solid food for an entire day. When was the last time you got to eat an entire box of lime Jell-o? When was the last time you had popsicles for breakfast? Make a cheerful game out of it! I was only allowed one popsicle at a sitting as a little girl. Well! I told myself I'd live life large the day before my big event last week. At only 40 calories, I told myself I could eat as many as I wanted! Funny, I never ate more than two at once, but I gave myself permission. (Rootbeer and banana are still the best!)

And broth. So many flavors now of the low fat, low sodium variety. I looked forward to a new taste experience, anticipated it, and I enjoyed it!

When you tell yourself you're happy and excited by small pleasures, believe me you will be. So tell yourself that! Life is a daring adventure; embrace it! For a few days you simply **MUST** follow orders and trust medical rules. They know how to make this work properly. It's like trusting our Lord. Draw close! He won't let you down! He knows what's best.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

Did you realize there are actually pills now that you can take instead of that drink that everyone makes fun of gagging down? Ask for the pills. They were easy.

Yes, you WILL have to go to the bathroom, that's a fact. But it's a controlled situation—it's over fairly quickly. You won't be getting up at night, and it's over before your test. Honest.

And the day of? You will feel a needle prick where drugs are administered to make you very sleepy. And that's it! I actually hoped I could watch some of the procedure on the screen. (You may not achieve that level of interest and curiosity!) But I saw 12:11 on the monitor when the drugs were injected...and the next I knew it was reading 12:40 and they were waking me up. The procedure was over, and nothing hurt! Not then, not later.

I understand that polyps are a common finding but that most are benign. If they are present, rejoice your physician has identified an irregularity early and can address. In any event, it's likely you won't have to schedule another test for 5 or 10 more years!

And now it's over! Euphoria! You will feel jubilant at your having concluded this milestone test! Treat yourself! Enjoy lunch or dinner out as you end your fast!

Am I Pollyanna? Probably. But did it help my mood and my outlook and make the process a whole lot easier? You bet it did. I'd rather be happy than glum. And I'd rather be well than sick. Or wondering.

March is Colon Cancer Awareness Month, and this seemed a timely topic. I apologize for bossing you, but I think sometimes we need it. And the encouragement of someone who has been there and done that. There is a natural fear of the unknown—but now you know!

I sincerely suggest that if you are at the milestone age—or past but have never had this test—please please step up and schedule one. Or is this your year for having the test repeated?

And if there's anyone you know who needs that first one or is due for another, encourage her (or him) that now's the time.

We all want to see Jesus, but we do not want to see Him sooner than we need to.

“Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours!” 1 Samuel 25:6

Cindy Zattich, Vice President of Human Care