

To The Congregations of Our Lady of Grace and Transfiguration:

My deepest thanks and gratitude to all who prayed for me, visited me in the hospital, sent Get Well cards, and named me in Mass offerings during my nearly four months of hospital care in late 2025.

The unexpected and shocking suddenness of it all---like finding one's self buried alive in a diabolical nightmare--was exceeded only by its severity---massive cardiac arrest, collapsed lungs, and other breakdowns of bodily functions (the exact cause of which, to this day, remains unknown).

I would have died on the spot, had I not already been at the Tri-Valley Stanford hospital, having undergone a procedure to prevent the occurrence of the heart condition known as "A-fib." Ironically, the procedure was a complete success---it was, in its aftermath, that some strange factor caused my body to go haywire. But medical personnel sprang into action, and I got further life saving treatment on the helicopter that that airlifted me to Stanford's world-class facility in Palo Alto.

A friend of mine called my survival a "Miracle," and I credit the grace of healing prayers and the support of family and friends in making my miracle possible. Happily, I kept my good humor throughout. And as the days, weeks, and months dragged on, the love and prayers of my faith community sustained me, kept me going.

Although I've fully recovered and was discharged from the hospital system in mid-November, my rehabilitation continues (months lying on a hospital bed has an enervating effect on one's muscular system). Rehab is a process, not a quick fix, and I've taken to heart the inspirational messages many of you shared with me, such as this scriptural quotation from 1 Peter 5:10:

"And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast."

That's a Promise--and our Destiny.

With Thanks and Love, MARK COTTA VAZ