



7 July 2024

Dear Parishioners and Clergy, Family and Friends,

Summer is upon us. School is out. Many if not most of you have packed up and headed out for summer destinations in the sun. This is an annual ritual for Canadians. Aah, to relax in the sun and share the hours with extended family and friends. What could be nicer?

I have only one destination this summer... which I will share with you shortly. I continue to be encouraged and overwhelmed really by the assurances of prayers and well wishes for me. I feel that support very deeply, and I have a strong belief that such prayers are sustaining me in mind, body and spirit.

To bring you up to date. In early 2023 I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. I received radiation therapy for this, 25 sessions, and my radiation oncologist assures me that the prostate cancer is as good as gone. A result of this, however, is that I developed radiation cystitis in my bladder. This has caused a great amount of bleeding; so much bleeding that as my blood levels would drop, I needed blood transfusions. Over the past several weeks, I have received about eight units of blood. This has slowed down more recently.

The preferred treatment for radiation cystitis is hyperbaric oxygen therapy; my urologist referred me to the hyperbaric oxygen clinic at Misericordia Hospital in Edmonton, the closest such unit to Grande Prairie. I am due to begin this treatment – 30 sessions in all, about two hours per day Monday to Friday, for six weeks. I will remain in Edmonton from next Sunday, 14 July until the end of August. That will be my summer preoccupation – I look forward to this very much!

As you can see, I have high hopes for the success of this therapy. All the literature on it sounds very positive. Each person's body reacts differently to different medical interventions, of course, so my hope is not without caution. My urologist has discussed with me the other options should this fail. My trust is always in the Lord, who is the author and source of all life and goodness. If my condition changes significantly during the summer, I will send you a mid-summer update.

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "+ Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R.". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G' and a cross at the beginning.

Most Rev. Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R.
Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan