



Fr John Update

14.00hrs 26th Jan 2012

Fr John was allowed out of hospital yesterday (Wednesday 26th Jan) and will reside with his sister and her family until further notice.

Prior to Fr John's discharge the surgeon explained that he had removed a four inch diameter tumour and eighteen Lymph Nodes which were sent for pathological examination. The tumour was found to be cancerous and eight of the eighteen lymph nodes showed signs of that cancer. Whilst the surgeon is as sure as he can be that he has removed all the cancerous cells he can not be one hundred percent certain and has recommended a course of chemotherapy. What will be included in that course has yet to be decided by a team with more expertise in the field although Fr John has initially been advised that the treatment will take six to eight weeks and that there could be adverse reactions and side-effects to this treatment.

He has had a rest, is feeling much better and will be contacting me on a daily basis so as to keep abreast of all that is occurring in the parish and doing what he can, from a distance, to ensure that the spiritual needs of the people are cared for. Today's was a long conversation and, clearly, he was on top of everything and in many ways back to his normal self; although, there was no mention of football!

Once again, he has reiterated how grateful he is for the prayers of all, especially the very young from whom he is still receiving numerous cards which give him much pleasure.

Deacon Kevin

1510hrs Sat 21st Jan 2012

From the Bishop's Secretary,

"Please assure the parishioners at Mass this weekend of the Bishop's continued prayers for Fr John and them, and his thanks for their constant support of their hard-working, dedicated and excellent Parish Priest during his illness."

1400hrs Sat 21st Jan 2012

Two days ago Fr John finally realised that he had had a serious operation and switched off his phone. The good news is that he is doing very well. Very tired with some post-operative pain and discomfort his body is repairing itself day by day. The bowel is functioning correctly and he is taking liquids but, at the moment, his appetite is poor.

The best thing in the world for him is 'rest' and he is doing all he can to aid his recovery. It looks ever more likely that our prayers of intercession should be changing to prayers of thanksgiving!

And, once again, Fr John and all his family thank you for all the prayers being offered on their behalf.



2200hrs Tuesday 17th

Hopefully we are coming close to the time when these 'updates' will end as Fr John comes to follow the long and slow road to recovery!

The surgery appears to have gone well: very well.

Just before 9.00am yesterday Fr John sent a pre-recorded message to say that he was on his way to theatre. I suspect the nurses amputated his phone just before he went through the swing doors so as to avoid having to sterilise that too.

Fr John's surgery appears to have gone extremely well; even better than expected. The tumour was removed and the separated ends of the bowel re-connected. He was in surgery for just under three hours and woke in the recovery room just after noon yesterday before promptly falling asleep again. Just after three in the afternoon, he awoke on the ward with members of the family by his bedside. When his sister informed him that the church at Chapel-en-le-Frith had been crowded for mass and that the people of Chapel, New Mills and Marple Bridge had stayed behind to pray the Rosary as he was taken into theatre, emotion got the better of him and he fell asleep again.

Late last night he telephoned and sounded on good form – I already knew he was feeling well and the surgeon was feeling pleased with his work because I had been informed by a nephew that his sister had 'gone to Bingo'; that could only mean she was spreading the good news! He did sound well.

With tubes coming from his body in every direction he felt a little restricted in his movements. Fr John was able to tell me that the staff had told him there were 'no leaks' in the re-connected bowel and that he had started to take fluids. (I'm struggling to describe his description of what was encountered by the surgeon in relation to the liver but I'll try and use his words!) "The tumour popped out of the liver!" I get the impression that the tumour was growing on the bowel and was quite large. It was pressing into, rather than growing into the liver. It came away from and out of the liver in one piece without encouragement from the surgeon's scalpel! If I were to try harder with my description I would encroaching into the realms of fantasy! Whatever the reality, it sounds good.

Fr John is very, very, grateful for everybody's prayers and wants everybody to know just how thankful he is.

Nothing has yet been said about any additional treatment although, during the course of today, he was expecting a visit from the physiotherapist to ensure that he gets out of bed as soon as possible. He was very tired last night and today, I have not yet heard from him but this is still early for Fr John. (If he sleeps, I can have a rest!)

Deacon Kevin



9.30am Saturday 14th Jan

No News is excellent news!

Yesterday, both the anaesthetist and the surgeon came to visit Fr John and discussed their plans for Monday.

By lunchtime he was in excellent spirits and during the afternoon and evening we were able to discuss various aspects of parish life including sacramental, social and catechetical plans for the future. He really was on good form! Every conversation ended with instructions that I should thank you all for your prayers, your cards and your good wishes.

And, just in case I had failed to understand or appreciate what he was asking, he rang again in the late evening to emphasise just how grateful he was and provided me with a long list of things I should thank you all for. I'm sorry! Mea culpa! I did not make a list – but you get the idea!

As things stand, the hospital team intend starting to get him ready for surgery tomorrow afternoon. He is due in theatre at 10.00am.

He brightened even further when I informed him that the 9.30 Monday morning mass at Chapel-en-le-Frith would be offered for his welfare. A number of people have intimated that they will be making the 'pilgrimage' up the valley to offer their prayers with the rest of the community. That mass will be culminating just as Fr John is about to go into surgery.

Can you get to Chapel on Monday morning? You would need to leave Marple Bridge at about 8.45am. It would be wonderful to fill the church. I suspect it would give him a real recovery boost on Tuesday and Wednesday to learn that the church was full and that your prayers were culminating just as he was about to meet the surgeon.

If you would like to go to mass at Chapel on Monday and do not have transport or would prefer to travel in company with somebody else, please, let me know and we will see what we can do.

Deacon Kevin

1650hrs Wed 11th January 2012

It has been an up and down sort of day for Fr John with things sometimes changing by the minute. Pharmacists and nurses have been coming and going with various treatment paths and timescales being suggested. The tone of his phone call was one of uncertainty: he was clearly confused and as a result we moved onto more mundane parish matters!

Whilst he was talking to me I heard, over the phone, a knock at a door and also his automatic 'come in'. Quickly, he disconnected and promised to ring back. It was the surgeon.



Fr John telephoned me again a few minutes later.

As had been expected, the doctors and nurses, radiographers and pharmacist, had had their meeting just after 2 o'clock and a plan had been formulated.

Fr John will undergo surgery next Monday, probably in the afternoon, but he will let us know the time as soon as he knows it. The surgeon will remove the tumour which is about five centimetres in diameter. Only then, after testing, will they know how aggressive it is.

In the meantime, Fr John thanks everybody for their prayers, cards and messages of sympathy and asks, once again, that you continue to pray for him. He was really pleased and humbled to hear how the numbers at morning mass have increased since word of hospitalization has spread.

Deacon Kevin

11.40am Tue. 10th January

Your cards have started to arrive and it gives Fr John an inordinate amount of pleasure to read them. He thanks you for your prayers and Masses and encourages all who can, to come to Mass during the week and pray for him and all the sick of the parish.

Yesterday's CT scan has confirmed Cancer of the Bowel but on the good side this has not spread to the blood or the bone.

However, there are a couple of Metastasis on the liver ('modules' as he describes them) which are giving rise to some concern. As a result, he is due to have further blood tests during the course of today and a specialist is being called in to review the scan and test results.

It is still planned that the team looking after him will come together tomorrow afternoon so as to sketch-out his treatment.

During his telephone calls, I update him on all parish activities and receive my 'instructions'. It really did please him that last Saturday's Confessions over-ran and I am 'told' to do all in my power to encourage you all (or as many as can) to attend next month's First Saturday liturgies at New Mills.

Fr John's Mum and Dad, brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces are taking it in turn to visit him. All are very grateful for your prayers and messages of sympathy and are very appreciative of the support that you are providing.

On Sunday, he got to see the City/United match with another man on the ward – I'm not sure how the nursing staff reacted to his 'emotion' - they probably put it down to his having been in England too long; however, there is now a big notice above his bed which reads "Priest" (as if 'that' is an excuse).

Yesterday, before the CT Scan, he received the Sacrament of the Sick and so sounded quite elated and happy with life. Even today he sounds well and wishes you 'all of God's blessings'.

So please, keep him in your prayers.

As soon as there is more news I will post it and so keep you up-to-date with his progress.



Deacon Kevin

P.S. If you know of friends and parishioners who are concerned and keen to know how Fr John is doing, please direct them to this web page. Announcements will be made after each Mass in the parish even if there is no new news.

Tomorrow, Wednesday, there will be 9.30am Mass at Marple Bridge and

On Friday, there will be 10.00am Mass at New Mills.

Tuesday 10th January 9.00am

So many people, in the parish, around the diocese and up and down the Province of Ulster, have been enquiring after Fr John's welfare that it has been decided to dedicate a page of the parish website to keeping all informed of his progress.

Fr John has asked that all remember him, and the sick of the parish, in their prayers and he promises to return to Marple Bridge and New Mills as soon as possible. In the meantime, he will continue to monitor all that is occurring within the parish from his sick bed and ensure, from a distance, that all runs as smoothly as ever.

Background:

Since returning from his summer break, Fr John has been feeling rather listless and somewhat tired. He has had little energy and been suffering occasional pain.

After Christmas, when he returned home to his family for a short break, his sister noticed a distinct change in him and frog-marched him to the doctor for an examination. Blood samples were taken and the next day, as soon as the results were known, he was admitted to hospital where he remains.

Initial Observations:

In the hospital he received two units of blood and other fluids and prepared for further examinations. It was soon discovered that he had a tumour on the upper right-hand side of his bowel and that further investigations would be necessary.

Current Position:

Monday 9th January Fr John was due for a CT Scan this afternoon and may have additional tests over the next twenty four hours.

The medical team looking after him will be meeting on Wednesday afternoon to decide how they should proceed with his treatment.

Further information will be posted here as it becomes available.