

**Dear friends of Vital Signs Ministries,**

**March 2026**

Though the shortest month of the year, February this time around has seemed *very* long. Indeed, reading through my journal this morning in preparation for writing this month's LifeSharer letter was itself a long and pretty intense experience. For though there were several ministry *highlights* to be enjoyed and appreciated in February, there were also more than enough *lowlights* to have us crying out more than ever for the relief of the rapture trumpet.

Among the tests from this past month were things you are all aware of -- yet more bad news from the culture wars, more grave disappointments from the compromising Church in the U.S. and Europe, yet higher numbers of preborn kids killed by poisonous abortion pills, and the ongoing barbarism of Christians being violently persecuted around the world. Closer to home was our hearing of fearsome medical diagnoses regarding some of our friends. And, in the midst of these sadnesses, we attended 3 funerals in February: Bill Meier, Larry Harrold, and Winnie Kaipust. All friends, all pro-life colleagues, all saints of Christ whose impact on our lives have been extraordinary and will be forever appreciated. We have been especially close to Larry & Deb in recent years and I was deeply honored and blessed to be a part of his homegoing celebration, an event that was as inspirational as any of I've ever been a part.

Claire and I have also had our own physical challenges this month. Some were minor, like my second cataract surgery and ongoing physical therapy sessions for issues with my left heel and ankle. But some were much more serious, like Claire getting very sick and eventually learning she had Influenza A. Then, just as she was recovering from that, she began experiencing severe stomach pain which required a late-night trip to the Methodist Hospital emergency room.



A scan revealed that she was suffering from a rampant inflammation of her colon which had, in turn, created a perforation which allowed the infection to spread outside the colon. They admitted her immediately; started “starving” her to let things settle down, and began putting massive amounts of antibiotics into her system. She was there for three and a half days and, following her discharge, she needed to come back to the Methodist Hospital Infusion Center for another ten mornings to receive ongoing antibiotics. Those infusions took only a half hour and were painless. But *anything but painless* was another evening a few days out of hospital when Claire began experiencing deep, shooting abdominal pains even more severe than those that had first sent her to the hospital.

So, back to the E.R. we went with fears there had been a second perforation of the colon or something else of major danger. But the subsequent scan showed the colon was okay and still healing nicely. The doctor explained that Claire's pains represented spasms -- spasms which were not completely surprising given the degree of infection and which the doctor believed could be

controlled with a particular medicine. And though it was now late, Omaha was in the midst of a bad snowstorm, and I had just a little time before the pharmacy closed, we made it with a few minutes to spare. And -- thank the Lord for His kindness -- the medicine has proven to be of great help. Claire is healing and, though she is being *very* careful about her diet, she is "back at it" with abiding faith and good cheer.

The prognosis? Well, Claire needs to heal up for a couple of months and then get a colonoscopy -- always a difficult experience for her narrow and diverticulosis-ridden colon. That will serve as a prelude for the surgery which the doctors says she will almost undoubtedly require. Needless to say, your prayers in behalf of Claire (and for the work of Vital Signs of which she is such an indispensable part!) will be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Now, despite the sorrows and trials of this past month, I am pleased to say that February did have several bright moments with many of those blessings coming *in the very midst* of the challenges. How wonderful that God's grace shines brightest when the atmosphere around us appears to be so dark and desperate. For instance, at the memorial services of our friends, the testimonies of their "lives well lived" for the Savior was a profound, joyful inspiration to us as were, of course, our imaginations of the wholeness, happiness, and beauty they are now experiencing in heaven. And even in the midst of our fears and helplessness during Claire's painful ordeal, there were many moments of shared love and tenderness, of prayers and perspective, of humility and faith that Claire and I will long cherish. At Larry's memorial service, I quoted one of my favorite observations, a quick summation of the primary theme of the Psalms as expressed to me many years ago by our friend and pro-life colleague, the late Fr. Val Peter -- "Life is hard. God is good. Blessed be the name of the Lord." Amen.

But again, February wasn't all somber and trying for us. We were, for instance, wonderfully blessed by God to complete almost all of the Vital Signs tasks that had been on our February schedule. So please thank the Lord with us as I list some of those highlights.

\* Despite some pretty cold and windy mornings this past month, our sessions of prayer and pro-life witness outside the Planned Parenthood business were uplifting and strong.

\* We also managed to present our full schedule of "When Swing Was King" shows this past month. And each and every one was a heartwarming party with our audiences.

\*And speaking of parties, we had a couple of absolutely splendid ones with our congregation at Aksarben Village Senior Living. One had a Valentine's theme in which my sermon text, the song selections, and the sugar cookies we had baked and decorated all concerned love. And, added to these, were cards handmade by Karla Struble in which high school girls from Duchesne Academy had written heartwarming messages. Then, two weeks later, we celebrated 5 years of our Sunday afternoon church services there! (Next page)



Most of those who are involved from time to time in the Vital Signs visitation team were on hand for the event and together we enjoyed a great sermon, great music, and great conversation over coffee, lemonade and the infamous Napoleon Torte from the Lithuanian Cafe! Yes, great is the right word!

\* There were also some very encouraging visits with excellent friends in February, including both “Santa runs” where we took treats to people and then friends visiting us in the hospital, at our home or at a cafe as illustrated by this “post-hospital photo” at Cook’s Cafe in Lincoln with Claire and her siblings Kevin, Tim, and Denise. Thank you one and all.



Oh yes, another of those visits was with our neighbor, friend, and 14er hiking buddy, Aldo de la Cruz who told us all about his visit to El Paso, Texas and Juarez, Mexico where he finally won a successful bid (after more than ten years!) to get his green card. (For fun I’m tossing in this photo at the summit of Mt. Sherman from one of our 4 climbs together.)

Heads up!  
there’s still one more page for this month’s letter.  
Check out the reverse side.



\* Alright, let me wrap things up here with a few final items from our February activities. Claire dealing with all of the office and business details of VSM --- Getting my Christmas lights down --- Removing the snow from our and our neighbor's drive and sidewalks --- My always provocative Thursday morning meetings with John Malek --- A lot of reading (especially when Claire was sleeping in the hospital and at home) --- And, not to try and be *too* mysterious, but I had this month an extremely unexpected opportunity to provide a blessing to a longtime political opponent. You just never know where, when, or how God's providence will amaze you, right?

\* As usual, there was also a lot of correspondence and daily social media engagement this month. We compiled and sent out the Top 5 every Saturday and the Sunday songs on Monday or Tuesday. Every Tuesday is a Zoom conversation with my siblings. And we were involved in planning upcoming letter-writing parties (morning and evening of March 22), the VSM heaven brunch (talking about heaven together on Saturday morning, 10 AM on March 28), and the Business & Professional People for Life luncheon this week. Whew!

Finally, I'll close with a couple of recommendations I hope you will consider pursuing.

1) David Jeremiah's new book, *Heaven*; the Hoover Institution's online interview with Ben Sasse; Harbinger's Daily as a source of Christ-centered information about the culture wars; and my recent article on Vital Signs Blog (and the VSM website) on "Complimentary Living."

2) The Assure Woman's Center fund-raising banquet is on April 2. Please join us for this remarkable celebration of Assure's 40 years of ministry. It will be a super evening of information and challenge, including an address by the featured guest, Tim Tebow.

Thank you all for staying the course in your Christian pilgrimage. Wherever God has put you in His grand plan, your faithfulness is building a movement that's affecting the whole world and whose effects will echo through eternity. Thank you too for each prayer in our behalf, each encouragement, each use of our education and exhortation material, and each donation. We are deeply and forever grateful.

Blessings,