

## Companions on the Journey

November 17, 2019

Dear Friends in Christ,

Last Saturday evening at the 5:15 Vigil Mass, on my way back to the celebrant's chair after preaching I bowed my head at the altar as I typically do. But this time I was immediately beset by a dizziness that disoriented me. I knew I had to sit down but for the life of me could not coordinate how to lift my foot and put it down in some firm space. To me the whole sanctuary was spinning. I called to the gentleman who was serving to come over to me. He sensed something was wrong and I told him I was very dizzy. I don't remember much after that for a few moments except that there were suddenly several people there who were trying to prevent me from falling and who eventually got me to sit on the sanctuary floor.

I heard several people say "Call 911" and I thought—yes that is a good idea. I got my equilibrium back but was still weakened. The rescue squad arrived and came into the sanctuary and got me onto a gurney and down the amp to go to Abington hospital. While I was sitting on the floor of the sanctuary I heard the parishioners praying. It was a very sweet experience for me. I was able to speak to everyone from my position on the floor and describe what had happened. I did not pass out but was very disoriented for a few minutes.

The EMTs were very good and very efficient and asked me if I would go to the hospital because they thought I should. I agreed. And off we went. I was in the Emergency Room from around 6pm to 1:30pm when I was moved to a room. They did blood work, CAT scan, Chest XRay and were able to rule out heart and tumor issues. That enabled them to focus on the dizziness and they then began to ask with some specificity about my particular experience of dizziness. They were able to rule out side effects of medications and began to focus on inner ear disturbance. The more detail I provided them with the more likely their diagnosis. Around midnight a physician came in to speak with me about inner ear malfunctions, tubes and crystals and a therapy called the Epley Manuever that they would propose be tried the next day to ascertain if the condition was truly vertigo or something else.

The Physical Therapist worked me through a variety of exercises with my head and neck, walking up and down steps, around pillars, and then seated on a cot and lying prone and then with my head over the edge of the cot and turning in different directions. I was told that there was something very specific that he was looking for and if he saw it he would know right away. When I turn my head to the right as it was leaning over the edge of the cot I was seized with a recurrence of dizziness, "That's it!" he said. "That is what I was looking for. I know what is happening and how to fix it." It is called right auricular benign positional vertigo and with manipulations and exercise the symptoms can be pretty much relieved. I am grateful for all that I experienced throughout this whole experience. I could feel the power of your prayer and the protection they provided. I am most grateful. So opens another new chapter.

In the Peace of Christ,

Msgr. McHenry