

St Luke's in the City

Celebrating at the Crossroads

5th Sunday in Lent

9 March 2008

Dear Friends,

A Community of Joy, Hope and Encouragement

Last Saturday I was privileged to attend the Cancer Society 'Relay for Life' event. I was one of approximately 1,400 people of all age groups and from all walks of life. The 'Survivors' were identified by their red sashes held together with a golden daffodil. Men, women and children, a mother holding the hand of her 6 year old son (both wearing the red sash). The stories of their illness revealed in their faces, some may not walk next year. However, for this occasion they were bonded together, singing, marching and encouraging each other with hope in their hearts.

As the walk began to the strains of a pipe band, with the survivors taking place of honour to the shouts of encouragement and applause of their families, caregivers and staff of the hospital Oncology Department, there would not have been many 'dry eyes'. There were 'T shirts' and placards with photographs in honour of some who had not survived. One such photograph stood out for me: It was of a little boy with his arm around the neck of a baby elephant - the caption read:

"Miracles are not walking on water;
Not flying in the air;
They are walking on the earth."

Taking in this entire scene one could feel a surge of God's grace. Everyone and everything can be a divine blessing, a window of wonder on a God of Surprises. Throughout that gathering, there was an Inner Power, a Higher Self at work in each of those people - healing, loving, reassuring, comforting, encouraging and empowering.

With God at its centre, the human spirit is indomitable. It thrives in adversity. A poet once wrote:

"In the middle of my winter I discovered an invincible summer."

With my love,
Jim