

## A Letter From Archbishop Daniel Kucera

November 7, 2011

My dear brothers and sisters,

As we approach the celebration of Thanksgiving, it is natural to think of things for which we are grateful. I am reminded of the many cards, phone calls, visits and especially, the prayers I have received from many of you.

Since early May, most of my time has been spent both in Mercy Hospital and in Stonehill Franciscan Care Center, here in Dubuque. As I am unable to answer each of you individually, please accept this letter as my heartfelt and prayerful response, however late.

This is a difficult letter for me to write, because it covers a very painful time in my long life, that has been filled with physical, psychological and spiritual suffering.

Shortly before all this started I remember sitting in the Chapel at Villa Raphael in prayer and feeling very much at peace with God. I glanced at the crucifix and wondered what God had in store for me before He called.

This journey actually began joyfully with dinner one evening at a restaurant with several priests of the Villa Raphael. Just before entering the dining room, I fell. While it was a hard fall, I did not feel any bones break.

However, the pain persisted and several days later X-rays revealed a break in the spinal area. The initial spinal surgery seemed successful, but the next day a blood clot was discovered and needed to be removed at a second surgery later that evening. All of this resulted in damage to nerve endings which affected my left leg.



Since it is not clear if the nerve endings will rejuvenate with therapy, it is still uncertain whether I will heal well enough to walk unaided. God's will be done!

There have been challenges on other fronts as well. After six months of therapy at Stonehill, several attempts were made to see if I would be able to return to my apartment at the Villa Raphael retirement center, or as an alternative, in an assisted living facility. Though it was very painful and difficult for me to accept, my care-

givers vetoed my return to the Villa and the assisted living complex as well.

In my wounded psyche, the denial to return to the Villa amounted to denying a return to my home and my last physical connection to the archdiocese. It is God's abundant grace which is moving me beyond that way of thinking.

Stonehill Franciscan Care Center has now become my home, and a warm and caring one at that. The staff have been very friendly and helpful throughout this time of transition.

I firmly believe that the physical, psychological and mainly spiritual trials of these past months have culminated with God's will being much more visible in my life.

Believe me, my temper and "short fuse" were not nice to witness, nor were they a very good example. Surely it is your prayers which have prompted God's mercy to forgive my lack of spiritual stamina to accept his divine will.

I pray for forgiveness from all for any hurt I may have caused and I hope to be of help at Stonehill to give spiritual assistance to their wonderful and healing work.

You are all in my heart and mind. May God bless you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

+ *Daniel W. Kucera*

+Daniel W. Kucera, O.S.B.  
Archbishop Emeritus

Archbishop Kucera was 88 on May 7.

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