

Written by Jose G. Caedo

Saturday, 22 May 2010 09:42 - Last Updated Saturday, 22 May 2010 10:19

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I suppose it is now time to write this piece. Somehow I have hesitated, thinking it was embarrassing; just like exposing oneself in public. So many friends have asked me to document this story. And I now think it is a way of expressing my heartfelt gratitude to all those who prayed and gave me comfort throughout the ordeal.

A massive tumor was discovered during a colonoscopy. I had collapsed at home and been taken to the hospital by paramedics where the procedure was performed. The local oncologist found metastasized tumors all over the colon and trachea. He said they could no longer operate, or use radiation due to the extent of the growths.

{xtypo\_quote} **Editor's Notes:** During this editor's visit to the Bay Area in February 2003, the author, who is totally blind, showed me at the Disability Office in the San Francisco City Hall where he worked how he could do his job: A computer read his incoming mail and he would dictate to it his reply. Hard-copy letters were scanned and the computer's special program would read its contents. Replies were also dictated to the same electronic machine. Later when I picked him up for dinner, he showed me the same kinds of software and hardware at his home. {/xtypo\_quote}

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Because I had a kidney transplant, I was transferred to a different hospital, which specialized in treating cancer patients who were also organ transplantees.

They told me that I needed emergency chemotherapy. I was immediately confined and started receiving treatment. I was discharged and sent home after six days of continuous infusion.

The chemo side effects were excruciating. Worse, it caused my body to reject the transplant. Again, I was taken to the hospital.

The oncologists and kidney-transplant nephrologists had to work to overcome the reaction to the chemotherapy. For the first time, I wanted to die as a relief. Because my transplant was also impacted, I stopped urinating and gained 44-pounds of fluid from all the various IV infusions. For six days, I could not urinate. One night, in desperation, my wife, Jimjam, brought a small bottle of water from Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine, and I took a sip and prayed for a painless-and-peaceful passing.

{xtypo\_quote} **Editor's Notes:** Jimjam agreed to marry Jay Caedo in spite of knowing that he was going irreversibly blind due to diabetes. I told Jay and Jimjam that if someday I would write

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their love story, I would title it, “Love  
{/xtypo\_quote}

*Still at Last Sight.”*

The next morning, to the doctor’s surprise, my blood tests and kidney function improved. To this day, Jimjam and I believe it was only through Divine intervention that restarted the transplanted kidney.

But the cancer was still there – terminal lymphoma. The first oncologist said they could no longer give me chemo as the initial treatment nearly killed me, and further chemo probably would. He gave me only three-to-six months to live, if left untreated. Later, the Chief Oncologist said it would likely just be two-to-four months. I was told there was nothing more to do. The End of Life/ Palliative care nurse enrolled me in hospice care. Discussing my condition frankly with her, she said from what she saw, she did not think I would ever be able to walk out of my house again. Medics had to transport and bodily carry me up to our house, where hospice nurses and a hospital bed and oxygen compressor were waiting.

And so it went on painfully with much morphine from July to December. Constantly praying and just thanking the Lord for all his blessings, I was, you might say, “at the ends of the Earth”. Special people visited, called, and inundated me with e-mails.

One day I saw two women standing at my bedside, in prayerful positions. They were both wearing long veiled gowns. The strange thing was that Jimjam was just standing at my left, and

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I said, "Who are these friends of yours?" She said no one was there. And all that time, those two women just stood by while she was saying goodbye for work. The even stranger thing was I was seeing them as a totally blind man.

Come the end of December, I was near total exhaustion, and truly bored waiting for death. However, an intuition told me I was not yet ready to die.

So I called my nephrologist and asked her to help me get another PET scan to get a status of my tumors. Initially she said this was no longer available to me as I was already in hospice care. There was a discussion with the two oncologists. They said they thought further PET scans for a terminal patient were pointless. But I insisted, and my nephrologist fought for me.

They took me off hospice as MEDICARE would not pay for a PET scan for a dying patient. Good thing I have secondary insurance, and the test was done early January 2010.

### **Another Miracle Happens**

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On January 6, 2010, my nephrologist called me at home. The conversation went like this:

Doctor: "Jose, I have great news for you."

Jay: "Yes, Doctor?"

Doctor: "Well, The results came in yesterday and I showed them to Drs. X and Y. We were amazed. Let me quote from it: 'There is no evidence whatsoever of the previous tumors.' Jose, God has blessed you for some reasons . . ."

The gratitude I feel for God—and the legion of family, friends, former classmates, and online strangers who fortified me—knows no bounds. May I only be worthy of the extra time I have been given. As insulin-dependent diabetic since age nine, who went totally blind, had a triple bypass, and a stroke, I never thought these were punishments, but rather tests on how I would surrender to the will of the Lord. Truly, "Respira, espera" ("While there is breath, there is hope").

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Today, I am back to hemodialysis and in a wheelchair. Retiring to Manila soon. But every moment I give thanks to God and pray for you all who supported me . . . Indeed, when one is in extremis, one learns who one's friends are. Blessings to all. # # #

{xtypo\_quote} **More Editor's Notes:** Jose "Jay" Caedo will be probably remembered as the first Filipino-American blind member of the Executive Board of the California Democratic Party. He has since retired from politics, although he agreed to become the Honorary Co-chair of the 'Browns for Brown-2010,' which is working for the election of Jerry Brown as California governor this November. He is an alumnus of the Ateneo de Manila College of Law and—like this editor—a member of its Order of Utopia fraternity. {/xtypo\_quote}

To read the thirty or so commentaries or citations of Jay Caedo's often witty comments, please just type in "Caedo" in the Search Box at the top right of every page (beside the Login sign) of this website. He has written also two full-length articles for *MabuhayRadio*:

[The MacArthur Experience \(Part I\)](#)

[MacArthur's Philippine Experience \(Part II\)](#)

{xtypo\_quote} Jay had been officially commended both by then-Governor Gray Davis, and in a resolution recognizing his work, by the California State Senate. As well, the State Assembly and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors have officially commended him, along with various private organizations, for excellence in public service and community activism and advocacy. {/xtypo\_quote}