

Dear Ones, {December 21, 2008}

We are still in Minnesota- {editorial addition: we actually got home to Chicago the evening of 22 Dec, after a sunny drive thru a frigid and "piled-high-with-drifting-snow-but-clear-road" Wisconsin} - our drive up to the cities yesterday afternoon {Ed: in tandem with Denis & Susanna & passengers Patrick and Mary} ranked high on the all time horrible bitter cold, biting wind, blasting snow and black and white ice. But we are glad to have safely made it Sister Nancy's last celebration--it was a grand tribute to one who all the speakers acknowledged was an assertive woman. Sister Therese who delivered the homily at Mass spoke of her in Jungian terms-- as shadow and self of those Gospel women: both Martha, busy about many things, plain spoken to bluntness--scolding Jesus for taking 3 days to get to Lazarus--now dead enough to start to stink--and Mary, who chose the better part, joining in the meditating, reflecting on his words. The Mary part is probably the shadow figure--the face we saw less of but given how fiercely Nancy remained a woman of faith, a member of the community, despite her many loud questions about the Church pontifical. In her inimitable way Nancy was also the first member of the community to have chosen cremation so her earthly remains were in a small box, still interred in the cemetery, down a row and across from Mom.

John and Jeannie Hynes and their children/grandchildren were the official family but a cluster of cousins made it--all those from Southern MN were caught by the severe weather but Denis, Patrick, Mary of our family; DePaul and Mary Jo and Linda for Willettes, many Hughes children, and Greg Ackerman.

We stayed out at Susy and Denis's winter wonderland Thursday and Friday night. Saturday was the blizzard trip but at the end, a great 50th birthday party for B-O-B at Stephanie and Jared's - including a Christmas Caroling {Ed.: not all of us quite (nor quiet) singers of the Huddersfield Choir standard} . We got to see the love and talk to Kent and Trish and get first hand on how the twins are growing--they are so upbeat but very conscious of how much they appreciate the love and prayers from all sides--I am sure it is a factor in how things are turning out. It is likely Charlie will get home first, Ingrid later--she needs the surgery to reattach her bowel --she has been going with a colostomy since that early operation.

Today is even colder (*minus 10 fahrenheit*) and the winds and snow showers much worse so we have had to give up our plan to go to Southern Minn and say goodbye to Mike Willette--I-90 is closed. We will go to a play at the Guthrie this afternoon, thanks to Linda and Jan, see their new apartment and visit a bit more with Stef and Jared--we have a motel at the edge of Minn/Wis tonight and plan to take advantage of the one day of better weather to hightail it back to Chicago--where Nico, Sarah and Simone will hopefully have safely landed. Even Gogo thinks prudence is in order!

One piece of good news that came in--Savannah's blankie which had been lost in the bowels of USPS has been found--only 16 days of Priority mail- probably fending off pirates in Georgia and Mafia in Jersey City--Savannah promises to ask Blankie his adventures and write them down for us. With great love as the season of love is upon us. How blessed we are-- I am attaching the poem I read for Nancy.{Ed: see other link}.