

Me-me-me Birthday Prayer

It was my 59th birthday in October and as my feet hit the floor in gratitude galore mode, I prayed for myself. When usually morning prayers focus on my prayer box, the prayer list at my parish of St. Leo's, "prayer flares" in my weekly inspirational e-column and daily ones for my kids, siblings, mamma, hubby and our entire extended family (yes, I name each!), I chose to say great thanks to God that day for bringing me this far in life.

He's been a busy God protecting and leading me for 59 active years, and as I reflect on some of my foolishness (older, younger, many ages of it), I pondered how watching over me may not have been a small achievement on his part. I don't stay motionless for long and I've stood in many places on the globe.

He has lovingly protected me in cars, planes, shuttles, airports, trains, walking and upside-down amusement park rides. He has sent a plethora of guardian angels my way to watch over me through perilous situations and choices I cannot name lest my mother is reading this.

On that birthday, I prayed for the two useful hands he assigned to me, which held and raised four kids. He gave me soft lips to kiss them and long arms to hug them. He gifted me with two big feet, which has walked in countless roles as a female. More gifts of eyes and ears to see, hear and learn. God has blessed me with a decent brain and a good pen to fulfill my passion as a writer. (My mouth he made a little too loud, but that's just who I am.)

I lived a glorious typical childhood as he matched me with two superb parents and three incredible siblings. Always was there enough Italian food on our plates and soft pillows in our beds. He overcompensated somewhat on the quantity of

compassion in me, since my heart truly suffers for others as I hear of their troubles, accidents and sorrow.

God has bestowed in me a warm heart to fiercely love the people I love - right there ... *BOOM!* Am I thoroughly blessed or what!?!

So there I stood with outstretched arms, in front of a small San Damiano crucifix in my walk-in closet and prayed for no one or nothing else that October morning - only me. On my birthday. Because I could.

Selfish? Nope ... necessary.

I felt ***oh-so-grateful*** for existing safely and blessedly for 365 days short of six decades. I've never done that before - prayed only for myself in a single prayer session - and yet it felt suitable. No way I could have survived 59 years without God.

How far have *you* come in life? Consider praying all for yourself, too.