

To: Our Lady of Good Hope Parishioners

From: Doug Haywood

Re: Red Cross Blood Drive

Many of you are my friends, others know me by name, and others may recognize me only by sight as a long-time Proclaimer of the Word and Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.

For many years, I was a regular blood donor. My last donation was in April 2017. By my count, that was number 118, only two pints short of fifteen gallons over the years. According to the American Red Cross, I potentially helped over 350 other people. Shortly thereafter, I was diagnosed with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia and have not been able to donate since.

About four weeks ago, I was diagnosed with a more aggressive form of lymphoma. So far, I have received two of six planned chemotherapy infusions. However, the chemotherapy drugs are not very smart. Not only do they attack the cancer cells in my body, they also attack the good blood cells that I need. The effect of this is that my immune system is severely compromised (so I am unable to be here with you today or at future Masses), I am anemic, and I am at risk of potentially serious bleeding because my clotting factor is reduced.

I now find myself on the receiving end of the blood donations that I made over the years. Since July 1, I have received two infusions of platelets to assist with my clotting ability. Also, I have received seven transfusions of red blood to increase and stabilize my anemia although I am still very much below the standard level for good health. Over the course of my treatment, I expect to receive several more transfusions of both types.

I am not offering this information to gain your sympathy although prayers are welcome. I want to emphasize the importance of your participation in this and future blood drives here at church, at the Red Cross site on California Road, or wherever the opportunity presents itself. Please take a few minutes to sign up for the August 8 blood drive. A donation does not take much time out of your day, there is only brief discomfort for most people at the needle stick, and you get free treats when you are done. But, most importantly, you help other people through your generosity (possibly even me!).

If you have already or will still sign up for next week's blood drive, THANK YOU! If you cannot, please consider signing up for a future blood drive here at church or donate elsewhere, and regularly, at another location.

Others with illnesses like me, others needing blood due to hundreds of different circumstances, and I appreciate your help!

Thank you.