NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Hospitalized N.Y. dad gets to see daughter's first Communion

Catholic News Service | May. 2, 2013
Rochester, N.Y.

Confined to Strong Memorial Hospital as he waits for a heart transplant, Timothy Day of Kenmore, N.Y., wasn't going to be able to attend his 8-year-old daughter Erin's first Communion.

So Erin decided the celebration of the Eucharist should come to him.

"I gave her the choice if she wanted to go through with her class or have it here with me, and she said she wanted to do it with me, and that's pretty special," said Day, who has been living at the hospital for almost two months.

"The most special part was just being with my dad," Erin told the *Catholic Courier*, newspaper of the Rochester diocese, in a telephone interview after the Mass April 26.

Several weeks ago, staff at the family's parish, St. Paul in Kenmore in the Buffalo diocese, approached the Rochester diocese to see if a priest would be available to celebrate a first Communion Mass in the Interfaith Chapel at the hospital.

They were told it would be possible if they were willing to have the first Communion on a Friday and if they would be willing to have Retired Bishop Matthew Clark of Rochester celebrate the Mass. Day also received the sacrament of the sick during the Mass.

Both the Day family and Clark said the honor was all theirs.

"I am going to go home a happy man for having experienced your company," Clark said during the Mass.

Day, a Tonawanda, N.Y., police officer, said the Mass was special not only to have taken place, but to have included the participation of Clark.

"I think somebody upstairs was pulling strings for us," he said.

In a telephone interview after the Mass, Sherry Brinser-Day, Day's wife and Erin's mother, said the Mass so far exceeded their expectations the event almost felt surreal. But the family was honored everyone thought so highly of them to attend, she said.

"We want to make the best memories we can in the midst of all the trials we are going through," Brinser-Day said. "I am overjoyed at the outpouring of support. I am floored."

The event also included a large contingent of family, including Erin's younger siblings, Clare, 6, and Henry, 4; representatives of St. Paul Parish; hospital chaplains and personnel; a flock of local journalists; and a choir of local college students from the University of Rochester, Eastman School of Music and Rochester Institute of Technology who skipped end-of-semester activities to attend.

To all of them, Clark spoke about the importance of drawing the community through the Eucharist.

"I know (Erin) is honored by your presence and draws strength from your company," Clark said. "We are companions along the journey, trying to draw strength from each other in our faith."

The bishop noted that all are subject to the frailty of the human condition and that the faithful draw healing and nourishment from the Eucharist.

"None of us owns tomorrow," he said. "We don't own our health."

That point is keenly noted by Day, who is one of 43 people hospitalized or at home waiting for a heart transplant through Strong Memorial Hospital. He was diagnosed in October with an autoimmune disorder, which damaged his internal organs, including his heart.

He said the hospital staff has been very accommodating, which has made his long-term stay easier.

"They are doing this for me this afternoon," he said about the first Eucharist Mass. "They have gone above and beyond. I consider that a blessing that I have such great caregivers."

Source URL (retrieved on *12/18/2013 - 14:26*): http://ncronline.org/news/faith-parish/hospitalized-ny-dad-gets-see-daughters-first-communion