Voices of Sisters



Sr. Jane Marie Bradish sits after receiving a splint was placed on her wrist after a fall on All Saints' Day, Nov. 1, 2025. (Courtesy of Jane Marie Bradish)



by Sr. Jane Marie Bradish

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What started as a normal Saturday quickly became an adventure that continues to this day. My life and ministry is such that Saturdays are reserved for errands and chores. It was a beautiful All Saints' Day morning, somewhat unusual in the upper Midwest of the United States when winter should have been taking hold. The new neighbors were doing some yard work and I was going to get to meet mom and baby. We chatted briefly across the driveway fence when I took a step backward. Boom. Down I went.

Initially I thought I was just winded and would be sore. However, I couldn't get up from the ground. Neighbors assisted and I went into my home to get some ice. It soon became apparent I needed to get checked out. Two hours later I returned home splinted together with a referral for a surgeon. Within days, I had surgery to repair a badly broken wrist.

Health-wise, I've been extremely lucky, so all this was new. The initial practical details (e.g., rides to and from the hospital and offers to help with snow) fell into place fast. Surgery went well and I was home in time for lunch. Colleagues wanted to DoorDash/Grubhub meals for me, a plan I stopped before it started. It's not that I wasn't grateful; it was the fact that I couldn't manage getting the door open and closed, receive the delivery and unwrap whatever food treasures arrived. Zip-top bags, snap-top containers and cling-wrap, among so many other "usual things," are sources of frustration. None are easily manipulated with one hand. I am grateful that my single-handedness is not a permanent reality.

Post-surgery is when the real adventure started. I quickly learned there were a bunch of things I wouldn't be able to do, some I could work around, but others not so much. Everyone else went back to life as normal. The initial outreach of "How are you?" and "What can I do to help?" stopped nearly as quickly as it started. I'm not blaming or shaming anyone; everyone has their own life, and it's busy. And honestly, I was OK. I'm just as guilty of reaching out when something happens to someone and then not following up.

So what am I learning?

I'm independent, to a fault. Those first days before surgery, when I was splinted to my shoulder, someone had to help me get my coat on and off. I was determined to do it myself, but ultimately had to ask for help. The same dynamic was true for opening my water bottle and any number of other seemingly simple activities.

People were gracious and happy to help, but I had to *ask*.

Life continues on. People reached out and offered words of encouragement, prayers and generally checked on me. But within a week of surgery, the outreach had pretty much stopped. Everyone had moved on. I, too, was trying to resume life as normal, but the reality was I needed help and the only way that was going to happen was/is for me to reach out.

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Healing is slow. Meeting with the surgeon and her team, it became very clear I am not young anymore. In the orthopedic world, I'm actually considered close to geriatric. That was a rude wake-up call. Each and every practitioner who saw me before surgery reminded me that the recovery process was going to be long term and slow. At this writing I'm eight weeks post-op and am about to start physical therapy. I can only imagine what that will entail after being immobile for so long.

It was pointed out that the fall, injury, surgery and beginning of recovery all happened during Advent. Advent, the time of waiting! There were no decorations in my home — too hard to do. I found myself reflecting while staring at my blue splint. Other than the obvious wait of having my wrist back in working form, what exactly was I waiting for? I don't know that I have any of that figured out yet.

As days moved into weeks and now months, I've gotten more comfortable with reaching out and asking for things. I'll be honest: I still try to do things myself first! Prayer has consisted of being quiet — period. In the quiet I try to discern what I can do, what can wait and what I need to ask for. My surgeon has indicated this journey will continue into Lent … not the most encouraging thing I've heard, but an opportunity, I guess.