

FROM:  
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To: **michael@trauma.org.za**  
Subject: **A Heartfelt Thank You to God and Friends Around the World**

Dear Friends

For some time I have wanted to express to you all a deep sense of gratitude. Through loving thoughts, prayers and good wishes, you have all accompanied me on the journey which I have travelled since I first contracted meningitis and was hospitalised in Canada in May. (Many of you were also there with me in different ways when I was bombed in 1990.)

In June I saw Professor Michael Besser, a neurosurgeon in Sydney (undoubtedly one of the best in the world). He confirmed that the meningitis was bomb related and that it was likely to return and could easily be fatal unless there was major surgery to repair the outer wall of the brain.

After a one week delay because of other emergencies, the operation finally took place on August 27. Although I was fearful of the operation, I was very conscious of the support and prayers of many people in many parts of the world. Consequently I felt calmer than I had for all the previous operations and more rested because of the week's delay.

It was extraordinary to be sitting up in a chair the morning after the operation and to be thrown out of the hospital as a too well person 5 days later. (I can recommend the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital to you all should you need it!) The wound has been healing and fading so quickly that no-one in Cape Town is going to believe that the operation actually happened. At least I have a photo of my head stapled together.

The medical people prepared me well for all kinds of horrendous side effects including a swollen head (No comments please!) none of which came to pass.

Before, during, and after the op I have been spoilt rotten by my

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sister Helen and brother-in-law Clive, to whom I remain deeply and permanently grateful. Thank you Helen and Clive.

Dr Diana and Professor John Horvarth played a major role in ensuring that I had the best treatment which Australia could offer.

I have been helped by the love of my mother and my sister Irene and her family.

My community of SSM brothers has also been very supportive. Colin, a member of my community has been to stay for a few very pleasant days and another Dunstan, is about to arrive.

Thanks to the concern of Archbishop Njongo I have had a large number of messages from Anglicans all over Southern Africa and from the Archbishop of Sydney. In spite of his own ill health, Archbishop Desmond has been quite wonderful in his loving and prayerful messages of support.

Every day, e-mails, faxes, phone calls, letters and cards have flooded in - even a Huegenot cross from Shalom Ministries in Chicago and a number of welcome messages from the government and people of Cuba.

It has been deeply humbling to have had this scale of support from around the globe and I value them all greatly from every quarter which they have come.

You and I must especially thank Alison Saayman from my office in Cape Town who has superbly co-ordinated the communication to most of you and to Bonisile Hove for keeping the home fires burning.

Two days ago I saw and expressed great gratitude to my surgeon Professor Michael Besser. He is happy for me to make my journey home to Cape Town on the 20th September. I will see him once more in January. I have to take one lot of medication until January. For the future I can live completely normally without any special precautions.

Meanwhile those whom the Truth Commission believe were responsible for my bombing were subpoenaed to answer questions at the time I was being operated upon. They refused to answer questions about cross-border

activity and this refusal is in the hands of the attorney general of the Western Cape. To be continued.

Whilst people here have been very wonderful I am looking forward to going home to Cape Town next week (even if we didn't get the Olympics!) Once more I have survived and need to focus on my next move. A new chapter in my life begins. I hope I can learn and grow as a result of what I have experienced.

I will continue to work for the healing of others just as so many have played a part in my healing.

I hope that wherever and whenever possible I can do for you what you have done for me. Thank you for being my friends.

I thank God.

I thank you.

With my prayers and love

Michael Lapsley, SSM

