

October 15, 2007

SAY A PRAYER FOR LITTLE ABBY SMITH

If you have tuned in to see who is going to get sledge-hammered this week, the answer is no one. Politicians of all types and persuasions are getting a pass. Hollywood draws a bye as well. You will find no barbs aimed at cat lovers, the blowhard City of Atlanta or airheads who insist on talking on their cell phones in the checkout line at the grocery store. Even my liberal friends can exhale for the moment.

Instead, I am going to ask for a favor.

First, a little background: A couple of years ago I met a beautiful young lady named Abby Smith. Perhaps the cutest two-year-old I ever laid eyes on. Curls galore, eyes as blue as the Caribbean and a smile that would melt the polar cap. It was love at first sight for me, although I'm not sure I knocked her socks off. A little too old and too wrinkled for her tastes.

A couple of weeks later Abby suddenly and inexplicably began falling down a lot. Her parents took her to the pediatrician, thinking that perhaps she had an inner ear infection. That is when the bottom fell out of their lives. Further tests revealed she had a brain tumor. A cancerous tumor, as it turned out. Surgeons removed it immediately. Thus began a myriad of problems that no one should have to endure, particularly an innocent child. Abby temporarily lost her eyesight. She was unable to speak for a long period of time. As these conditions began to improve, new complications appeared. The ups and downs of the past two years have been a roller coaster of emotions for her family and for the rest of us who have been pulling for her recovery.

Just when it looked as though things might be getting better, bad news has hit again. Now Abby is facing new and inoperable tumors on her spine. Frankly, things don't look good at the moment. Experts are talking about what to try next: clinical trials, radiation, combinations of drugs. In my opinion, it is time for a miracle.

This is where the favor comes in. Please pray for Abby.

It doesn't matter what kind of faith you practice, whether you are a Christian, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, Shintoist, or whatever. Dr. Gil Watson, the World's Greatest Preacher, has assured me that God listens to all prayers, even from sinners like me. Besides, wouldn't it be nice if we could forget for just a moment all the issues that divide us? This is no time to split hairs about what we believe or don't believe, or to argue about who is right and who is wrong. This is the time to pray for a miracle for Abby Smith.

Last year I asked you to write the men and women of Georgia's 48th Brigade Combat Team in Iraq, and the response was in the thousands. Now I am asking you for another good deed. Pray for this young lady and tell everybody you know to pray for her as well, and tell them to pass the word along to everybody they know. I know from my mail that you have shared my opinions with friends around the country and around the world. Do it again. Please.

I don't understand why bad things happen to good people like Abby and her parents, but if it would get Muslims and Catholics and Protestants and Jews praying for her young life, she will have accomplished something not even the greatest theologians in history have been able to do — unite us all in a common and good cause. Maybe if we did more of this kind of thing we could learn to hate each other less. Admittedly that is a stretch, but it is worth a try. I suspect God would be delighted to see us make an effort to get along for a change.

Next week we will get back to pompous politicians, those insufferably rude cell phone yakkers and other assorted irritants. But for now, let's concentrate on little Abby Smith. She needs a miracle. She needs your prayers. Pass it on.