



“To all my St. Jude family, thank you for giving me my second chance at life,” says Anthony Maranise.

Thanks to what I call “the living saints” of St. Jude—the patients, their families, doctors, researchers, nurses, staff, volunteers and generous financial supporters—the form of leukemia I once battled is now nearly beaten for good.

After years of returning to St. Jude for continual monitoring, I “graduated” into the hospital’s follow-up program. Today, I return often to St. Jude as a volunteer, bringing spiritual care, hope and comfort to other patients who share my faith.

St. Jude will always be a part of my life. In fact, I even had the logo tattooed on my ankle. It reminds me to be thankful for the people and the place that let me live and to pray continuously for those in my St. Jude family who are fighting presently.

As I continue my graduate studies in theology, preparing to become a priest, I am sometimes asked questions. My favorite question is: “Where is the holiest place you’ve ever visited?” Hands down, because of the ways in which faith, hope and love are constantly demonstrated in the care for all patients, and through the bravery, perseverance and trusting confidence of all the patients, my answer is always, “St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.”

To all my St. Jude family, thank you for giving me my second chance at life. It’s my turn now to give back to you. Though I can never entirely repay you all for what you’ve done for me, I shall pray that my service—both to the children and families of St. Jude and to all of God’s children—is a start. ■

A **Message** to My St. Jude Family

A former St. Jude patient comes full circle—giving back as a volunteer.

By Anthony Maranise

Recently, in my service as a volunteer Eucharistic lay minister at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, I was called to visit a little boy with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). When I went to his room, I saw the all-too-familiar sickness caused by chemo. His family seemed distraught, having only recently learned of his diagnosis.

In the course of our conversation, I told them, “I’ve been where you are now. I was a patient here myself not too long ago. We are all family and are all in this together.”

The mother began to cry as she hugged me. “Thank you so much,” she said. “You have no idea how comforting that is to hear.”

Later, she asked: “What was your diagnosis?”

I replied, “The exact same as your son’s, and here I am 17 years later!”

On October 11, 1994, I first came to St. Jude as a child with ALL. Every Tuesday for the next two-and-a-half years, I returned for what seemed like countless “sticks,” “spinals,” chemotherapy doses and exams. In April of 1997, my remission was confirmed. I had battled, beaten and survived the very cancer that once was almost a certain death sentence.