

Javi Zubizarreta – Words of Remembrance for Kevin Healey – 5/3/09

When I traveled to Cleveland this past week to attend Kevin's funeral, laughter was the last thing I expected to find. But, as we attended Kevin's viewing, I was soon greeted by a series of photographs from his time here at Notre Dame. They were photos of Kevin at his best – playing with hammers at the Fisher Regatta, posing for shoots with NDtv, dancing the night away on St. Patrick's day – all moments of intense laughter and joy. Over the following days as we went through the pain of saying goodbye, we shared in the laughter of Kevin's greatest moments and I was reminded of something Kevin often said to me, "From great pain comes great humor."

I cannot think of any better saying that so perfectly encapsulates somebody so wry and devilishly funny as Kevin. I don't remember Kevin ever saying more than a few sentences about the disease he faced, but I do remember the almost constant stream of jokes and droll comments that kept everyone around Kevin laughing. I remember working with Kevin for NDtv, writing and shooting skits about angry hairdressers, talking washing machines, and some unusually masculine Southern Belles – all of which will be airing tonight from 6:00 to 7:00 on NDtv - Channel 53. I remember late night walks from the Browning Cinema; laughing about the film we thought was an environmental documentary but turned out to be a horror film set in the North Pole. I'm sure we all remember the many hours spent watching Food network in his room, laughing at the ridiculous amount of butter that Paula Deen was using – but at the same time salivating over the chocolate-caramel-cherry-whipped cream-fried chicken concoction she was cooking. I know that I will best remember the time that Kevin and I convinced a certain friend of ours that I had a twin brother, only to have this "twin" of mine meet our friend and exchange words in the secret twin language we described to her.

As I look back on all the time we had with Kevin, I can't help but smile and laugh, and I don't think that Kevin would have it any other way. Throughout his unimaginably courageous battle, Kevin's greatest and most powerful weapon was his fantastic sense of humor. With each new day, I could count on Kevin to make me laugh – whether through a Youtube video entitled "Grape Lady Falling" or some sly comment about a particularly ridiculous moment from class. The very fact that Kevin could smile, laugh, and make others laugh at a time when most would don a devastated frown is a testament to his unparalleled strength and resilience.

With each new day, with each new struggle we face, we have a choice: you can let the pain take you down in despair, or you can move forward with hope, treasuring each moment of joy and sharing your laughter with as many people as possible. Kevin made the second choice and there isn't a single person here who isn't supremely blessed by Kevin's commitment to making the most of every moment of every day. Kevin was with us for a short time, but in the grand scheme of the universe, we are all here for a short time. Few of us realize it, and even fewer make the most of it. Every day, every hour, every moment is a precious gift, and Kevin took every one of his gifts and shared them with the people around him. There is truly no better way to honor Kevin's memory than to strive each day to live as he lived – moving past any pain and sharing our joy and laughter with the people around us. Mr. and Mrs. Healey, Mary Kate, thank you, thank you with all my heart for giving us your amazing son and brother. Whether I knew him for a day or two years, it was a blessing and an honor just to have known him at all.

Please know that he is with us always. From his reserved seat in Sorin's Chapel, to the illuminated Grotto and everywhere else on our beloved Lady's campus, Kevin is still very much with us. The pain of his passing is still devastatingly fresh in our minds, but if we make the choice that Kevin made and live each day mindful of the memories he gave us and the humor that surrounds us, we can come together and find strength through the joy and laughter of each precious moment.