

“Life on Hold” – by Lorelei Pepe

During the beginning of the Corona Virus Pandemic, I had trouble with my computer. Computers and I don't seem to get along well for some reason! My laptop was only 2 ½ years old and I needed a new “hard drive” which was Greek to me! But, it was replaced after a few frustrating weeks.

After that, I had a problem with my cable company, Optimum in getting WIFI. This went on with them for 3 weeks until someone decided I needed a new router and modem. They sent me both in the mail and expected me to set it up. “Easy, they said” and I laughed to myself. Well, that did not work so back to being on “Hold” again and explaining the problems I was having. I am sure many can relate to this experience, and the time it took, which was hours for the customer service reps and tech people to call back. I opted not to wait at least 45 minutes on hold. Sometimes they would call back at 8 o'clock at night! Finally, a tech came to my house, masked and wearing protective gear and fixed it. I still have a laptop with WIFI limited to one room. I give up! My patience level is pretty nil right now.

So, I thought I would get a break from all these technical problems but NO, of course not! One day when I was trying to access my WORD account to write my monthly stories for the church website, a flashing occurred on the screen that I needed a new Product Key and the Windows license was about to expire. I tried ignoring this, but that did not work. So now, it was time to call Best Buy and of course, listen to the “prompts” and then be put on hold, naturally.

Apparently, my WORD subscription had expired and it needed to be renewed...for \$99.99! I thought that was a lot, but what could I do? However, when I tried to install the new product key code, it failed. So back to the customer service rep at Best Buy. They had access to my computer and went inside internally, but it took 2 tries. Then a bright rep asked me who else used this computer? I said, “No one, but me” and she said well for a single user, we can charge you only \$69.99. I was thrilled, but of course needed billing now to cancel the first charge and add this. Again, on hold! Now I am holding my breath to see if they put the cancellation through and charged me correctly!

In the meantime, my screen flashed “windows is expiring” so I called again and one of the techs figured that the old Word had to be uninstalled before the new one would work. Okay I said, whatever works at this point. When he said can I put you on “Hold” for a few minutes, I nearly blew a gasket, but what could I do? I would like to say at the time of this writing this has been resolved but it isn't. At least I can write my stories.

Did you know that the computer can get confused just like a person by the pounding of the keys? And after all this work done on my computer, it shut off and would NOT go back on! I prayed to God there would be a solution when I started dialing Best Buy again. Luckily, I got the nicest tech person who actually was sympathetic and told me to relax. We just had to reboot the computer which we did successfully. Praise the Lord!

I am pretty drained with all this emotional toll it has taken on me. So, every morning before I turn on the computer, I pray. Yes, I pray that it works and I can have one more peaceful, less stressful day.

I know for sure, God does not put me on “hold”. Yes, sometimes He is silent in answering me, but I think maybe He is working on the problem. I talk to Him most days, all through the day. He is my friend and comforter! Living alone during this isolation, has been the hardest thing I ever had to experience. Even going through the many Hurricanes in Florida and being along for 3 weeks during Andrew was not as bad as this. So, my Savior gets me through it and in fact, I think my faith has gotten stronger through these many months. He has eased my mind, my fears and doubts in myself. I am learning to trust Him and trust Him alone.

But, the worst time is at night, when I wake up in a cold sweat after a nightmare! The dreams have been crazy and taunting at times. I know this is the same for many as I have spoken to others as they have experienced the same thing. But when I wake up startled, I gather my wits and talk to God. I hear Him whispering “Call on Me! I am here for you. Even in the silence the Lord is near. “Take my hand, Lord” I pray as I stretch it out to Him and I can feel comforted.

As it says in Psalm 61, when I cry out to the Lord and pray to Him, He hears me. When my heart is overwhelmed the Lord will lead me to a higher place. The Psalms have been a great comfort to me through all the rough times in my life. They have helped me trust in the Lord and to have faith. I read somewhere the word “faith” appears in the N.I.V. Bible over 400 times in the Old and New Testaments. This is what I pray for, my faith to grow deeper and stronger each day despite these crazy, chaotic times we are living in. I will get through this and so will my fellow Christian believers. Because of our faith, He will carry us through. All we have to do is to choose to focus on Him, praying constantly and keep looking up. We will rise above it all!