

MY CATARACT EYE OPERATION

Fr Varghese Paul, SJ

Sharing the experiences with some people I feel that I got the best. For my cataract surgery I got not one but two eminent and highly experienced eye surgeons in Dr. Sandeep Parmar and his wife Dr Hetal Patel. Both are specialists, M.S. in ophthalmology.

Dr Sandeep explained to me the procedure of cataract operation with computer animation. First my eye is diluted with eye drops. Then the eye is made numb with anaesthesia. When the eye is numb with a small surgical tool an incursion is made into the eye. Through the incision a hollow tube is inserted and a fluent substance is injected into the eye to stabilize the interior and maintain eye pressure. Again through the incision a hollow tube is inserted, through which ultra sonic energy enters and breaks the cataract. The hollow tube sucks out the broken pieces of cataract.

After removing the cataract through a hollow tube an artificial (in my case, made in Germany) folded intraocular lense is inserted. The folded lense unfolds and replaces the eye's original lense.

When my eye operation was scheduled, I shared the information with my friends through my Christmas-New Year mail. As soon as my sister, Sr Lissy Paul received my Christmas 2016 mail she called me. On health matters I always consult my sisters either Sr Lissy Paul or Sr Celine Paul. I trust and follow their enlightened advice as Celine was first in Nursing in Gujarat State and Lissy was first in Nursing in Karnataka State. Besides, Celine has experience of running a hospital in Eritrea in West Africa for more than five years and Lissy has received an Award from Gujarat Government for her outstanding medical services among the tribal sickle cell patients in South Gujarat.

Lissy on the phone spoke to me about some concrete details eye operation for cataract. So I became especially alert. She said, "Chetta, I know very well about your habit of going for good and cheap things. But in your eye operation please do not go for the cheap lense. Even if it is expensive please get the best lenses for both your eyes".

Then Lissy shared with me the experiences of a priest who went for a cheap lense and after a few years his eyes became bad beyond any cure as the cataract lense could not be replaced.

I told Lissy that there is no cause for worry. An year back I have met some eye specialist in a big hospital and they advised me cataract operations for both my eyes. Now I am going for the operation to a known expert eye surgeon Dr Sandeep Parmar and I will let him know her advice. After reading my Christmas mail a lawyer friend Dr K D Parmar phoned me. "Fr. Varghese, do not worry about your cataract eye operation. Some ten years back both my eyes were operated for cataract. Now I can read and write well without even spectacles. About my eye operations I tell people that Motilal (for cataract) has gone and Maniben (for lense) has come!

My health remains in good shape. I hardly fall sick. Even at the age of 73 years I maintain good health. I may take some ayurvedic or home remedies for some common sickness like cold and cough. So I do not worry at all about health matters.

When I met Dr Sandeep in his Yeshvi Eye Hospital he explained well to me and Fr Devasia who accompanied me about the process of cataract operation. But to tell the truth I did not understand everything the eye surgeon said; but from the clarifications sought it was clear for me that Fr Devasia understood everything. On the basis of his own eye operation Fr Devasia was asking questions and Dr Sandeep was giving him satisfactory answers.

But I was fully satisfied when Dr Sandeep said that he is going to put the same German made lense, which he used when he operated his own dad's operation. I knew well his dad, Mr Simon Parmar, who was a very devout and efficient teacher in St Xavier's School, Mirzapur. When I heard about Simon my worry, if there was any, disappeared.

Fr Devasia asked Dr Sandeep about the cost of the operation. Doctor explained to us about the usual cost of the operation. Then he added, "I have done free of cost the eye operation of my Principal Fr Sergio Dias. Then, I took only the material and hospital expenses from a Nun who is doing free services like you. I have let go 40% of total cost. I know well the free services done by you priests. So you pay me whatever you can".

Hospitals in usual cases do operations only after the full cost of operations is deposited in their account. In my case neither my residence Gurjarvani nor my office CISS had money for my operation. So knowing that both were not in a position even to contribute a share of the operation cost, the Jesuit Provincial agreed to pay for the operation.

To cut a long story short, my Superior gave me a blank cheque, which I passed to Dr Sandeep after the operations of both my eyes. From the receipt he gave me, I understood that he has generously given me 40% discount letting go fully his fee. He had also not charged me for the medicine, three types of eye drops and the eye-protection glass, which he had given me.

For my first left-eye operation my sister Lissy accompanied me to Yeshvi Hospital together with Frs Devasia and Francis D'Sa from my community. As Lissy was interested to know the details of my operation, after the operation Dr Sandeep call her and my two companions to his consulting room and explained to them the operation showing the computer recordings. So they were happy with the operation. Lissy said to me later that Dr Sandeep told her about my 100% cooperation in the cataract operation. So I and all were happy about my eye operation.

After the first operation a friend, an Indian English poet and author Dr (Prof) K V Dominic phoned me. He said, "Fr Varghese, I know now that you may be suffering a lot. But please take care. Now you can't read or write. No newspaper and TV. You can't go out of your house. You have to keep always a dark glass to protect your eyes from pollution..."

Dr Dominic spoke to me long giving the experiences of the cataract operation of our common friend Dr (Prof) T V Reddy, who is also a well known poet and writer in English. Interrupting my friend Dominic I said, "Sir, you may be right about Dr Reddy. But here after my first eye

operation I have absolutely no pain or suffering. In fact, I am enjoying a “Paradise” like life here. I have given holidays to my alarm clock. So I get up only when the birds start singing for me to wake up. I enjoy the sun light both in the morning and evening. I do loiter in the small garden in front of my house. I am delighted to see and admire the variety of flowers with their multi-colours and innumerable sizes and shapes.

“The gardener Atmaram has assured me that all the butterflies flying around are dancing only for me. I converse with my great ancestors - about two dozen monkeys - jumping and flying around on the tall trees of the botanical garden of st Xavier’s College, close to my residence. They seem to be happy with my non-threatening presence...”

Interrupting me Dominic said, “Father, I know that you are also a nature-lover like me and that you are concerned for the environment”.

After our conversation in lighter vein I explained to my poet friend Dominic about my left-eye operation. I have had Dr Sandeep and his wife Hetal Patel, both specialists and well experienced in ophthalmology for my operation. The operation was less than 10 minutes job. I was out of the hospital in about 2 hours.

After a week of left eye operation I have had my second eye operation on January 6, 2017. Now after both the operations I tell people in the words of a well known humourist Ratilal Borisagar in Gujarati, “Motilal gaya ane Maniben aavya”.

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