

And so the story goes…

There was a young woman who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness and had been given three months to live. So as she was getting her things in order, she contacted her pastor and had him come to her house to discuss certain aspects of her final wishes.

She told him which songs she wanted sung at the service, which scriptures she would like read, and which outfit she wanted to be buried in. Everything was in order and the pastor was preparing to leave when the young woman suddenly remembered something very important to her.

“There’s one more thing,” she said excitedly.

“What’s that?” came the pastor’s reply.

“This is very important,” the young woman continued. “I want to be buried with a fork in my right hand.”

The pastor stood looking at the young woman, not knowing quite what to say.

“That surprises you, doesn’t it?” the young woman asked.

“Well, to be honest, I’m puzzled by the request,” said the pastor.

The young woman explained. “My grandmother once told me this story, and from that time on, I have always tried to pass along its message to those I love and those who are in need of encouragement. In all my years of attending socials and dinners, I always remember that when the dishes of the main course were being cleared, someone would inevitably lean over and say, ‘Keep your fork.’ It was my favorite part because I knew that something better was coming…like velvety chocolate cake or deep-dish apple pie.

> Something wonderful, and with substance!”
>
> So, I just want people to see me there in that casket with a fork in my hand and I want them to wonder “What’s with the fork?” Then I want you to tell them: “Keep your fork…the best is yet to come.”
>
> The pastor’s eyes welled up with tears of joy as he hugged the young woman goodbye. He knew this would be one of the last times he would see her before her death. But he also knew that the young woman had a better grasp of heaven than he did. She had a better grasp of what heaven would be like than many people twice her age, with twice as much experience and knowledge. She knew that something better was coming.
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> At the funeral, people were walking by the young woman’s casket, and they saw the cloak she was wearing and the fork placed in her right hand. Over and over, the pastor heard the question, “What’s with the fork?” And over and over he smiled.
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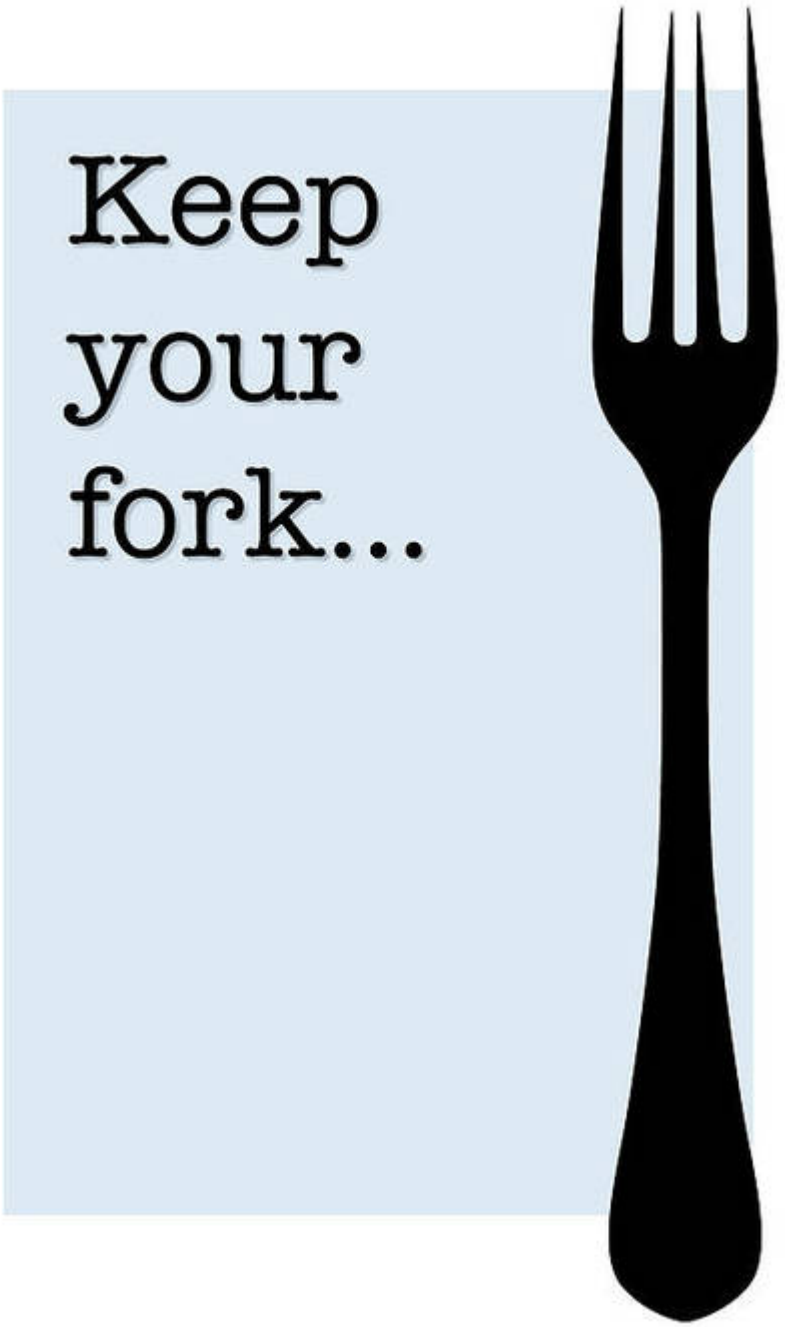
> During his message, the pastor told the people of the conversation he had with the young woman shortly before she died, and about what the fork symbolized to her. He told the people how he could not stop thinking about the fork and told them that they probably would not be able to stop thinking about it, either.

Neither have I, actually. I discovered and read this story to my Sunday school students many years ago, and it stayed with me. I hope it stays with you, too, and that the next time you reach for your fork, you let it remind you, ever so gently, that the best is yet to come.

“And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”
-John 11:26

What are you thankful for today?

Until next Thursday’s post…si Dios quiere.


Keep
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fork...

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