



Brendan

LIVING WITH ALPHA-1 ANTITRYPSIN DEFICIENCY

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In the early weeks of COVID-19, from March to May 2020, my wife and I gradually became accustomed to and comfortable with the Government and HSE guidelines and advice, perhaps mainly in a manner of expecting the COVID dilemma to be brought to an end during the Summer of 2020. This feeling of positivity was greatly enhanced and made somewhat more enjoyable, as it was accompanied by weeks of wonderful springtime weather — daily sunshine, blue skies — during which we together engaged in an unprecedented spell of homestead gardening, landscaping and more general attention to our gardens, lawns, shrubs, flower planting & maintenance .

It was an early and different chapter of the COVID experience, ahead of the more demanding and compulsory episodes of lockdowns, cocooning, social distancing, mask wearing, etc., etc. which were to follow throughout the summer, autumn and winter months of 2020.

On a personal level, I rather enjoyed the early 6 weeks of COVID, mainly for the above described period of 'slowing down', as it were, and allowing me to breath more easily (given my Alpha-1 condition). I might say - it was a lovely time to be alive. I have generally g one about living

and life, without concerning myself too much 'about myself'.

My life has focused on my working career (construction materials, and public transport in the later years prior to retirement in 2014), with my ambition and emphasis on stable family life, love for my wife and education for my 4 children. My family and I have recognised the vulnerability of life and now we better understand our mortality and the enormity and fear of a potentially fatal disease. COVID-19 now brings a greater and more immediate risk to my life than my Alpha-1 rare disease. That’s my lesson from the past year.

I am ever thankful and prayerful to The Lord God, the HSE and all their medical advice and guidance, Alpha-1 Foundation and my family for their protection, care and love. I look forward to 2021. With greater public and individual commitment and adherence to daily medical advice, government legislation, COVID vaccine programming we can individually and collectively aspire to living safely out of the current pandemic. I look forward to further years of enjoyable family living and reuniting in typical tradition with immediate and extended family, together with friends, neighbours and colleagues everywhere.