I am amazed at the "Bodies" flap.

I'd imagined that we had evolved to think that the human form is just meat.

Boy, am I glad I was wrong.

Since a Feb. 13 column appeared in which I complained about the splayed and filleted cadavers at the Carnegie Science Center through January, a score of concurring messages has come in.

Of course, there were a couple that said my words would have a chilling effect on "medical research." To be frank, I don't see the correlation.

Still, I am grateful for those who understood my sentiments. I am also grateful for and humbled by the accompanying kind wishes and promises of prayer in relation to my having Lou Gehrig's disease.

Having the disease was really the point.

This 90 percent-fatal, incurable disease has given me a new way of looking at things that, I must say, is a blessing. So, seeing the bodies of strangers treated so ignominiously made me ponder what gives human beings worth.

Ask yourself.

Is your value contained in the ability to move about? Even though I can yet shuffle along with a cane or on my husband's arm, I hope I am wrong, but it appears that my walking days are numbered. Is your value contained in the ability to speak? ALS robs its hosts of that, too.

One fall evening, some good women friends and I had planned to meet for prayer. We all believe in Jesus Christ and for a few years now we have gathered to chat, eat and pray for each other each month.

I was preparing to go, but right around the time I was to leave I felt burdened and despairing over my inability to speak.

I thought, "How can I be with a group of chatty women and not be able to talk? It's madness!"

I had my husband call and tell my one friend, who was poised to pick me up, that I couldn't go.

"She says she doesn't even feel human," I heard my husband quote me during the call.

It was a really low point.

But, I later re-examined my decision and thought, "You goof! What could be better for you than being with people you love and who love you and who will pray to God -- the one person who can do anything -- for you?"

I also realized that my speaking was not what made me valuable to my friends. Showing that I cared for them and respected them by spending time with them is what made me human and thereby valuable to them and to me.

So, I determined that I would not pass up another chance.

Recently, I had them all over. They brought lovely desserts: buttery yellow cake, double-rich chocolate pound cake, toffee...
cookies and a beautiful spinach quiche. Yum!

One of the sweethearts also handed me a bouquet of pink rosebuds interspersed with twigs of delicate baby's breath. I carefully snipped the ends and put the flowers in a vase of water.

While we relaxed later in the living room, I noticed that my cat had climbed up on the hutch ledge. The flowers were there and he took a notion to sample the tender baby's breath.

Forgetting that I can no longer walk well, I jumped up to rescue the buds and promptly toppled over. All my friends gasped and rose to help me.

How embarrassing!

Of course, Nick the cat, scampered away unscathed.

It was the second such mishap that evening. The first was when I lit the fire and found that I could not raise myself up from my knees. One friend, bless her, rushed over and helped set me aright.

No one laughed, but when I think back, the incidents are rather comical.

However, my friends' reaction was a lesson for me. They responded to the inherent worth of a human soul that they knew and cared for even though it seems that her walking/talking days are done.

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