



OLPH Ministry of Consolation

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Ministry of Consolation

Introduction to our Newsletter & Ministry

Welcome to our first OLPH Ministry of Consolation Newsletter. We are a group of lay ministers created to provide a service to the parish through the love of Christ with a commitment of caring, compassion, and support for one another who have suffered a loss.

This newsletter is intended to be a resource to assist all parishioners on a positive path for resolution of grief following the death of a loved one, and to provide information to help others be supportive.

Our goal is to meet the needs of those in our parish who are facing a terminal illness, confronting the death of a loved one and the many details of planning a funeral. In addition, we would like to provide opportunities for hope and healing through a variety of services to assist in the grieving process.

We welcome your ideas and prayers for future issues of this newsletter, and for this ministry.

Functions of the Ministry

The Ministry of Consolation will address the needs of the Parish by:

- Supporting those who are dying as well as their families.
- Working with those who are grieving the loss of a loved one.
- Helping with initial arrangements, funeral details, and follow-up after a loss.
- Assisting families who are grieving by providing support through follow-up visits, phone calls and cards.
- Acting as a continuing resource of consolation and encouragement for parishioners.
- Developing an annual All Souls Day Mass commemoration.

Our Beloved Parishioners Remembered (2009)

In company with Christ, who died and now lives, may they rejoice in Your kingdom, where all our tears are wiped away. Unite us together again in one family, to sing Your praise forever and ever...Amen.

(Excerpt from Catholic Prayer For The Dead)

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Richard Howard Bell	Alden R. Pettitt
Thelma Blackwell	Charles M. Shryock
Caroline Burrows	John C. Shymansky, Jr.
Helen Louise Coffman	Joseph L. Tippet
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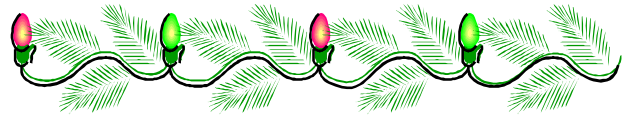
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Coping with the Holidays

The holidays are among the most difficult times for bereaved families. Below are some suggestions that may help you in dealing with the upcoming holiday season.

- ❖ Call a family meeting and discuss your plans for the holiday season, understanding that it would be unusual for you not to feel emotionally, physically, and psychologically drained. Don't set your expectations too high or you may find yourself disappointed.
- ❖ Well intending friends and family may want to include you in their plans, believing it best for you to "get away" from grieving your loss. They do not understand that you cannot escape the grief that you feel. There is no obligation to say "yes." Only participate if you truly want to.
- ❖ Try to take care of your health. It's important that you eat and drink properly, exercise, and get plenty of rest.
- ❖ Take time to do the things you as a person want to do. You may want time alone to reflect or to write your thoughts. Keeping a journal or writing letters to your loved one is another way to stay connected to them.
- ❖ If it is necessary for you to buy gifts, consider ordering them over the Internet, by phone or with the help of a friend. Most who are bereaved find it draining to go out and fight through crowded stores bustling with holiday cheer.
- ❖ It is not unusual for you to want to include your loved one during the season. You may want to do something like: Ask friends and relatives who knew your loved one to send you a story about them that you may not have known; create a holiday prayer for your loved one, or wear an item of the deceased as a way to feel connected.
- ❖ Remember that the anticipation of a holiday is often worse than the holiday itself.
- ❖ It is okay to cry, it is not a sign of weakness.



When A Family/Friend is Grieving

There are no words to make that all right. But there are many ways you can help by being supportive.

It is important to know that grief is a normal, healthy response to loss. It is a physical, emotional, spiritual, and psychological reaction. Anger, fear, frustration, sadness, loneliness, guilt, and despair are all part of the grief process.

Understand that grief is neither a sign of weakness nor a lack of faith. Actively grieving people experience pain, confusion, lack of concentration, and isolation. Those surrounding them often express frustration and a sense of helplessness, which may, in time, turn to annoyance if the grieving "takes too long." Yet, the disorientation of grief lasts far longer than our society recognizes.

What Can I Do?

- ❖ Listen. Let your family, friend or co-worker express the anger, pain, disbelief, or guilt that may be there.
- ❖ Avoid judgments of any kind.
- ❖ Remember important days such as holidays or birthday or death anniversary. Send a card, call, or visit. Let the person know that you remember, too.
- ❖ Be patient. Grief can last many months, even years. It can also resurface unexpectedly!
- ❖ If at work, talk with management about ways your company can be supportive.
- ❖ Be sensitive to the fact that people grieve differently. Some may find great comfort in their work, while others may view it as an extra, sometimes unbearable, burden.
- ❖ Offer to share the person's workload, if you can. Sometimes the smallest gesture lightens the load.
- ❖ Cook a meal or provide gift certificates to a restaurant are a wonderful resource when time & energy are depleted.

