

November Reflection

The Bereaved – “Blessed are those who mourn they shall be comforted” – Matthew 5:4

November is the month we remember all those who have died young and old. The death of a loved one has a devastating effect on those left behind as Jesus said those who grieve need comforting never forgetting every loss is unique and each man, woman and child grieves in their own way.

The covid epidemic hit us all hard, our churches were closed and in hospitals and care homes staff worked tirelessly to save as many people as they could often losing their own life in the process. Churches were all closed, but death was all around us and fear was in the air. How could we help those who were bereaved? Those grieving were isolated often alone with their grief. Would it be possible to set up a Grief and Loss Support Group in our own parish of Our Lady of Lourdes, Mickleover? Could this help parishioners who were grieving? I had completed bereavement support training but wondered if a group would ever get off the ground. Could this group be the answer to prayer? Barbara, another parishioner, also took the course and agreed to help. Father Jonathan, our parish priest, was very supportive and so when restrictions began to ease, we held our first meeting on 13th May 2021 in the church gathering area. There were meeting restrictions, but support groups were allowed to meet. Three parishioners who had recently lost their husbands came along and Our Lady of Lourdes Grief and Loss Support Group began.

We have now been meeting on the second and fourth week each month for over three years starting each meeting with the Memorare prayer to Our Lady knowing she is always close to us, and we close with a prayer chosen by a group member.

Our group offers a gentle, safe environment of compassion providing listening, confidentiality and hope. As a member of our group says:- We must always have hope - if we do not have hope we have nothing. Everyone is welcome to join us. We have flowers at each meeting to brighten our time together bringing us peace. This group has enabled me to see with stark clarity God at work in our world.

'Let me come in - I could only breathe a prayer and hold your hand.

For I have known sorrow such as yours and understand.'

From To One in Sorrow by Grace Noll Crowell.

How has bereavement impacted your faith? What has brought you hope in times of sorrow?

How could you be a beacon of hope for those who are grieving?

Our Blessed Mother knows the pain of grief and her Assumption reminds us of the power of Christ's victory over death.

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided.

Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me.

Amen.

Written by **Julie Corden**

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