

stands firsthand the positive power of scrapbooking. "The idea is to provide an opportunity for families, caregivers and patients to work together on a project inspired by memories, allowing them to engage in the healing process," she says. Amanda says the process of scrapbooking encouraged both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication that allowed Ben to express, understand and validate his emotions.

WHEN MEMORABILIA BECOME MEMORIAL

After three months in the hospital, UCSF doctors decided that Ben's only option was a heart transplant. "We knew when Ben went in that it was 50/50," Amanda recalls. Surgeons couldn't control Ben's bleeding and he died during the procedure on December 24, 2005.

"I think that we were all in shock for several days," Amanda says. But it wasn't long until family, friends and UCSF staff turned to his scrapbook for solace. Though he was unaware at the time, Ben left behind an endearing legacy that those close to him will cherish for generations.

True to his spirit, Ben's mother, Amanda, sisters Emily, 20, and Demelza, 8, and friend Kristen Farnum, recently created Ben Perez's Scrapbooking Club, a program at UCSF that provides each sick child with an embroidered bag filled with scrapbooking tools, an album, paper, stickers and pens. The club also supplied UCSF with two digital cameras and a printing dock. "It's been a huge success. We've already run out of albums so I'm currently looking for donations." Amanda says.

The power of Ben's scrapbook, just like the loving boy who created it, continues to be a positive influence in the Perez family. The moments of his life—the grief, the love and the poignant occurrences that might have otherwise gone unnoticed—are all recorded forever. "I look at his book often, which is hard, but it also gives me a little happiness that I have something he worked on before he passed away. Emily, Demelza and I talk about Ben all the time.



Nancy Duncan, MSW, social worker, artist, writer and lover of all things crafty, helps people turn piles of photos into treasured heirlooms you can enjoy and future generations will treasure. Her article is used with her permission. Contact: www.scrapcottage.com or Nancy_Duncan@earthlink.net.

CUANDO LLEGA EL DOLOR

Diácono Ray Ortega

Puede que tu no sepas qué hacer cuando el dolor y el sufrimiento se dejen sentir en tu vida. Si hay algo positivo que puedes hacer es buscar en tí el ánimo y la manera de hacerlo. Recuerda que el dolor y el sufrimiento no tienen sentido en ellos mismos, es solo abriendo nuestro corazón y confiando en Dios que podremos encontrar el significado y el valor a eso que sentimos y así poder continuar adelante en la vida.

Cuando sepas aceptar tu propio dolor, te sentirás espiritualmente ligado a todos aquellos que también sufren, no importa su condición. Recuerda que el dolor y el sufrimiento nos hace más humanos y también nos ayudan a que nuestro corazón crezca en gracia. Unete a aquellos que sufren, déjales sentir tu compasión a través de palabras y acciones que puedan servirles de ayuda.

Recuerda que el sufrimiento es hermano de la alegría, nunca ha habido un arco iris en el cielo si antes no ha habido lluvia. No existe tampoco el arco iris del alma si antes no ha habido lagrimas en los ojos. Ten siempre presente el no recurrir a Dios solo en momentos de dolor y sufrimiento; recuerda que a Dios se le ve mejor a través del dolor y las lagrimas. Desde el fondo del abismo, es desde donde se ve mas el brillo de las estrellas en el firmamento.

Confía en el Señor tu Dios, porque en los momentos de dolor y sufrimiento, es de él de donde viene todo consuelo y fortaleza.



Deacon Ray Ortega was ordained in 1979 for the Archdiocese of Miami. He is a certified Pastoral Bereavement Specialist from the World Pastoral Care Center and a member of the South Florida Chapter of ADEC. He is Master of Ceremonies for the Auxiliary Bishop, the Most Rev. Felipe de Jesus Estevez. Ray currently serves on the

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