



# Journey

Newsletter of the  
National Catholic Ministry  
to the Bereaved

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## CREATING MEMORIES

*By Joan Ross*

As a mother who has lost two children, both parents and numerous other family members and friends, I've discovered that creating memories through a variety of activities and projects can help the healing process.

One of the most meaningful to me is the precious sculpture of a mother and two children that my husband purchased for me while we were vacationing in California shortly after the death of our children. I keep it in the entry of our home with two candles from the Compassionate Friends candle-lighting service and I light these on their birthday and anniversary dates.

When my mother was dying I decided to do a video of her life, using photographs and music. My daughters helped me with this project and we showed the video throughout the evening at her wake. So many people in the family loved seeing it that we made copies for them as gifts. Our mother was the last of her five siblings to pass on. Later, I used these same photos along with some others to compile a memory album adding her biography and some family stories.



For both of my children who have died, I've made 12 x 12 memory boxes (available at any craft store like Michael's or Ben Franklin). You can use photos (or a favorite photo) along with items like school letter in sports or music, even items of clothing, jewelry or a scrap of material from a favorite item of clothing. Because I do scrapbooking, this seemed like a good way to keep their memory alive and I display them with other family pictures on the bookshelves in our family room.

Presently we are in the process of assembling a memory quilt (actually a 40" x 40" wall hanging) of family members who have died. While we chose to do one picture in each of nine blocks, a collage or other variations are available. The best place I've found that will put your pictures on quilt blocks is [bluebird@bluebirdgardens.com](mailto:bluebird@bluebirdgardens.com) in Rolla, Missouri. They are wonderful!

*(Continued on page 3)*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

- 1 Creating Memories
- 2 Message from the President
- 3 NCMB Membership Meeting Announcement
- 3 NCMB NEEDS Your Help
- 4 Cozy Memories
- 6 Dates to Remember
- 6 Reflections on Turning Fifty
- 7 Healing Activities for the Bereaved
- 8 Tener al Señor
- 8 Book Reviews: *AND JESUS WEPT* and *Letters to Heaven — Words of Comfort for the Grieving*
- 9 Resources
- 10 Healing through Helping
- 11 Creative Bereavement Approaches
- 12 Membership Information

*Message from the President continued*

of consolers in the context of the Catholic Church. We have a common mission, even though we are spread out across the land, and a mutual responsibility to encourage and support each other in our most important ministry. The NCMB tries to be a link in this ministerial continuum. This issue of *Journey* exemplifies a key element of our ministry—assisting the bereaved in sharing their stories and memories through many creative means.

So if you are like some of the ministers of consolation in my parish and are looking for some fresh insight and inventive ideas to support the bereaved on their journey of healing, I hope you look to *Journey* and the resources of the NCMB as your ministerial partner in the ministry of consolation. You should never feel alone in your ministry. The NCMB wants to walk with you and support you in the ministry of consolation. At all times I invite members to tell us how we are doing at this and how we might do it better.

**John M. Cherek**  
*President*

### NCMB MEMBERSHIP MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The National Catholic Ministry to the Bereaved will hold its Annual Membership meeting on Saturday, October 7, 2006 at 3:00 pm at the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet Retreat and Conference Center in St. Louis, Missouri. As a member of NCMB you are invited and encouraged to attend. We will be reviewing the past year's work and ministry and also proceed with business matters for the National Catholic Ministry to the Bereaved. This meeting will include proposed changes to the by-laws, updates on grant writing projects, elections of new board members and discussion of the continued ministry needs and focus for NCMB. Please plan to attend.

For more information visit: [NCMBereave@aol.com](mailto:NCMBereave@aol.com)

*"Creating Memories" continued from page 1*

They created a layout and with the customer's help select the fabric.

In closing I'd like to share with you a poem by Lois Duncan entitled "Album of the Heart" that I have in my own family album.

### ALBUM OF THE HEART

*By Lois Duncan*

As the year draws to an end  
We grow close again,  
Turning pages of our lives  
Pausing now and then.  
To recall a magic time  
Or special place  
Springtime sunlight leaps at us  
From a smiling face.  
Summer laughter rings anew,  
Mixed with autumn tears,  
Seasons blend and mash and blur  
With the flying years.  
Guard the Album of the Heart  
There the memories are--  
Gentle as the drifting snow  
Holy as the star.



**Joan Ross**  
*resides in House Springs, Missouri. She is a Stephen Minister and a past member of the NCMB Board of Trustees.*

### NCMB NEEDS YOUR HELP

One of the ways you the readership can help us is by sending your email address and the email of anyone who might benefit from our resources. We want to keep you informed of new developments on a timely basis. Send your address to [NCMBereave@aol.com](mailto:NCMBereave@aol.com).