



Journey

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to the Bereaved

Holiday Issue

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HELPING BEREAVED CHILDREN COPE WITH THE HOLIDAYS

by Rev. Deacon Brian K. Shaffer, CPBS, GC-C, CT

What must it be like to be a child who is grieving the loss of a loved one, or seeing a loved one change in so many ways including emotionally and physically, and at the same time being expected to enjoy the holiday season? The following are some hints, which will assist you as parents, relatives, or friends, to help those bereaved children cope with the holidays:

- ★ Realize with the capacity to love, comes the necessity to mourn. Therefore, there will be times during the holiday season that will be especially painful for children. Allow them some quiet time with you to express their feelings.
- ★ Ask the children if they want to put up a tree and other decorations. If they would like to do so, include them in the decorating process.
- ★ If baking cookies was a tradition in your family in previous years, you might like to continue this activity or select another type of goodie to make, such as candy.
- ★ Give children a gift or an item that belonged to the loved one, which would be appropriate to his/her age category.
- ★ Encourage children to make a treasure box containing memorable things belonging to loved one. It may be suggested that these “memory boxes” could be exchanged between siblings.
- ★ Make Holiday ornaments containing your loved one’s name. Hang on the tree or in another area of the house.
- ★ Try to keep some of the traditional practices of the holiday season. However, don’t be afraid to try something new.
- ★ Encourage children to talk about past Holidays with their loved one and what they liked best about this time.
- ★ Encourage children to engage in physical exercise. It is important that bereaved children be allowed to associate with friends during this time. Physical activity is one way to help alleviate the stress of the holiday season.
- ★ Encourage children to do something for someone else. (Example – Holiday caroling at nursing home facilities, hospitals, etc.)
- ★ Allow some time for young children to receive proper rest each day. Coping with the holidays can be emotionally and physically draining for everyone.

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- ★ Remember – Do not expect too much from bereaved children! They are hurting and need our love and support. Give them an extra hug at the end of the day.



Brian Shaffer is an ordained Deacon in the Reformed Anglican Catholic Church and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy and Theology along with a Master's Degree in Theological Pastoral Studies. He is a trained Minister of Consolation, Certified Pastoral Bereavement Specialist, Certified Bereavement Facilitator and Certified Thanatologist. Brian has extensive experience in Geriatric & Pediatric Pastoral Care including Hospice and Hospital ministry as a Chaplain. He has served on the Board of Trustees for the National Catholic Ministry to the Bereaved since 2000 and is Board Secretary.

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QUERIDOS HERMANOS.

by Rev. **Diácono Ray Ortega.**

A pasos agigantados nos vamos acercando a los días de Navidad. Si miramos atrás nos pareciera mentira que el tiempo haya pasado tan rápidamente. aparentemente fue ayer como aquel que dice que celebrabamos las Navidades del 2007 y ya estamos a punto de celebrar las del 2008.

Este tiempo de Navidad debe ser para nosotros los cristianos un tiempo de reflexión y de espera al nacimiento del Niño Jesús. Desafortunadamente nos complicamos tanto con el envío de tarjetas, preparativos para las comelatas y compras de regalos que se nos pasa este bello tiempo que debe ser de oración en todas estas otras cosas.

Este es también un tiempo en que vienen a nuestra mente aquellos seres queridos que ya han partido y nos preceden al regalo de Jesús que es una vida eterna en Su presencia.

Debe ser también para nosotros un tiempo que debemos aprovecharlo para orar y pedirle a Jesús que nace nuevamente que nasca en nuestros corazones, pedirle que nos de las fuerzas para continuar

y seguir adelante a pesar de la tristeza que sin importar el tiempo pueda invadirnos.

Siempre he dicho que el tiempo no nos ayuda a olvidar, el dolor siempre estará ahí, el tiempo lo que va a hacer es ayudarnos a hacer del dolor nuestro compañero de viaje. El tiempo nos enseña a vivir nuestra vida con el.

Sepamos aprovechar este tiempo que nos queda de espera al nacimiento de Jesús, no en solo enviar tarjetas, comprar regalos y preparar comelatas, sino también en orar y pedirle al niño Jesús que nace su protección, amparo y fortaleza para aprender a vivir con nuestro dolor.

Muchas bendiciones en esta Navidad para todos.



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 NCMB Board.