



Widow & Widowers Group - Holy Family Parish
2515 Palatine Rd - Inverness, IL 60067

To Be Joyful Again

May and June 2014

Dear Joyful Again Members,

In the support group recently, I shared an image that I think gives a wonderful depiction of grief. I heard it from Gregory Floyd, whose young son died in his front yard when a car jumped the curb and hit him.

Greg said that even at first, when the grief is most intense and the pain is searing, there are brief moments of joy. Some little thing makes you smile. Someone unexpectedly gives you a hug when you most need it. You momentarily lose yourself in a movie or a show and you laugh out loud. He called these moments the “bright splashes of color on the gray palette of grief.” Doesn’t that seem appropriate?

He cautioned against feeling guilty about the enjoyment these bright splashes bring. You need them. In fact, sometimes they are what sustain you and keep you going - the necessary break in the bleakness, the glimmer of hope that perhaps there can still be happiness in life.

Then, as you heal, the good times become more frequent and intense, while the bad times become less frequent and intense. It takes a long time, and the balance shifts back and forth on a regular basis. Eventually, though, the pain of grief does not define you. Instead, the times of pain become “the grey splashes of color on the bright palette of life.”

You never totally lose the grey. You will have grief bursts or “ambushes” as long as you live. You will not stop missing the one you so loved, or wondering what life would be like if they were still alive. Yet your life does not have to be defined in grey tones. There is still color to be had, joy to experience, new things to learn, friends to meet, and futures to re-build.

It’s a long process to move from a grey palette to a colored one. We can help. Come join us at a meeting. We support and encourage each other in ways no one else can because we understand - we’ve all been there. See you soon.

May God bless you
Amy Florian

Calendar of Joyful Events

To check weather cancellations, call Holy Family at 847-359-0042.

**Thursday
May 1**

7:00 Come to talk, and to get the advice and support you need. We break at approximately 8:00 for conversation and refreshments provided by our hospitality team. Everyone is welcome.

**Thursday
May 15**

7:00 Support group

8:00 General meeting

Neurons and synapses in the brain change as we age. How can we keep our minds active, alert, and clear? Tonight's presentation is sure to help. It is titled "Don't Slow Me Down with that Calculator." Cliff Petrak is a Teacher Emeritus, author, and a most enthusiastic, engaging speaker. He'll teach you to master a multitude of little-known, super-shortcut computational techniques involving addition, subtraction, fractions, squaring and multiplication. You'll soon leave your calculator-dependent friends in the dust! And of course, his techniques are great exercise for the mind as we age. Keep sharp. Keep smart. Come join us.

Note: If you are interested in Cliff's book, bring \$15 for a fun investment in your mental health and functioning.

**Sunday
May 18**

NOTE: BRUNCH IS EARLIER THIS MONTH due to Memorial Day. Come join us for Sunday brunch at the Knight's Café. Enter the Holy Family gym door between 11:45 and 12:15. Elaine and Debbie greet you by the register and direct you to our reserved tables. For only \$7, you get waffles, eggs, sausage, bacon, pastries, - PLUS ice cream, cookies and desserts. And it's all you can eat. There's no better bargain or cause, and no better way to have fun on a Sunday. Join us on the last Sunday every month for a wonderful meal with friends.

**Monday
May 19**

7:00 Our leadership team meets on the 4th Monday every other month. We meet early this month because of Memorial Day, and the meeting will be at the home of Lou Ann.

**Thursday
June 5**

7:00 Come to talk, and to get the advice and support you need. We break at approximately 8:00 for conversation and refreshments provided by our hospitality team. Everyone is welcome.

**Thursday
June 19**

7:00 Support group

8:00 General meeting

Summer is almost here, when you just want to kick back in the sunshine with a good book. But what to read? Helen Stewart, the librarian with the lovely accent, is coming back after getting rave

reviews last November when she talked about E-books. This time, her presentation is “Summer Reading – Warm, Fun, and Frothy Reads.” Come for an entertaining evening that will send you out with a fabulous list of recommended reading to ease you through the summer months. We’ll see you there!

Sunday June 29

Come join us for Sunday brunch at the Knight’s Café. Enter the Holy Family gym door between 11:45 and 12:15. Elaine and Judy greet you by the register and direct you to our reserved tables. For only \$7, you get waffles, eggs, sausage, bacon, pastries, - PLUS ice cream, cookies and desserts. And it’s all you can eat. There’s no better bargain or cause, and no better way to have fun on a Sunday. Join us on the last Sunday every month for a wonderful meal with friends

Thank you, Jo!!

We had so much fun at the Spring Fling party. The companionship was priceless, the weather cooperated, and the food wasn’t bad either! Many sincere thanks to Jo for opening her home to us and providing such wonderful hospitality. We really appreciate it!

Make sure you watch for the date of our fall party, and join us again for a lovely gathering of understanding people.

Joyful Again Retreat Weekends

June 28 & 29 St. Julie Billiart Parish, Tinley Park., IL
July 26-27 Holy Family Parish, Inverness, IL
August 2 -3 Mary Queen of Heaven, Elmhurst, IL
Sept/Oct Good Shepherd Hospital, Barrington, IL
Nov. 14-15 Our Lady of the Angels, Lemont, IL

Joyful Again retreat weekends are two-day programs for widowed people who want to resolve their grief and begin to live again. The weekend includes video presentations, time for reflection, and small group sharing with trained facilitators who have also been widowed. Participants talk about how they feel, listen to others, support one another, and heal.

Many members of our group have attended, and report that they were helped tremendously. It’s best to wait at least four months after the death, but you are encouraged to attend any time after that, even if it’s been years.

Saturday’s session runs 8:30 am to 8:00 p.m. You go home to sleep (unless overnights are available), and return on Sunday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. The cost is \$75, which includes 5 meals, refreshments, supplies, and anything else you need. Register: Charlotte Hrubes at 708-354-7211 or e-mail joyfulagain7211@gmail.com.

An Interesting Set of Articles on the Internet

We often talk in the support group about dreams, communications, and signs we feel we receive from our loved ones who have died. Many times, people wonder whether they are crazy, imagining it, or just searching so hard that they will interpret anything as a communication.

Some studies are showing that about 60% of people whose spouse, parent, or child has died had felt the presence of the deceased, and 40% say the dead person spoke to them in some way. In a survey of 2000 people across the country, 20 – 40% report having after-death communications.

Of course, not everyone receives signs, dreams, or communications. We've also talked in the group about that. (If 60% do, then 40% don't). Yet it can be wonderful for those who do if they know they are not going crazy, and they can allow themselves to gain comfort from the experience.

There is a series of articles detailing some of this work that you may wish to read for more information. One Caution: Most of these are not clinical studies. They largely rely on anecdotes and stories, and one article focuses on a controversial practice of inducing visions of the deceased. In other words, there remains no way to prove definitively that people who have died communicate with us. Still, they are interesting reading, and they confirm things that people in our support group have experienced and reported for years.

As one researcher says in the article: "Despite the comfort that these communications may provide, mourners often worry that if they are having these kinds of experiences, they must be losing their minds. In many cases, they are reluctant to talk with others about these experiences, fearing that people will think they are going crazy. This could help explain the societal belief that such communications are rare, and that they may be indicative of psychological problems. Survivors would benefit from greater awareness of how frequently these communications occur. Armed with such knowledge, they may be more likely to be comforted, and less likely to doubt their own sanity if they experience after death communication."

If you are reading this newsletter in electronic version, you can hold down the Control button while you click on this link and it will take you to the entire article series - **<http://tinyurl.com/lmqwwl2>**.

If you are reading it in paper version, type this address into the address bar of your internet browser (Internet Explorer, Chrome, Firefox, or whatever you use).

Judge for yourself. Hopefully, also gain comfort in the knowledge that you are not alone.

Thoughts for the Day

Youth is not a time of life - it is a state of mind, it is a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a vigor of the emotions, a predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over love of ease.

Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years. People grow old only by deserting their ideals. Years wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Worry, doubt, self-distrust, fear and despair - these are the long, long years that bow the head and turn the growing spirit back to dust.

Whether they are sixteen or seventy, there is in every being's heart the love of wonder, the sweet amazement at the stars and starlike things and thoughts, the undaunted challenge of events, the unfailing childlike appetite for what is to come next, and the joy and the game of life.

You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear, as young as your hope, as old as your despair.

When the wires are all down and all the innermost core of your heart is covered with the snows of pessimism and the ice of cynicism, then you are grown old indeed.

But so long as your heart receives messages of beauty, cheer, courage, grandeur and power from the earth, from man, and from the Infinite, so long you are young.

"Youth" by Samuel Ullman