

PONDERINGS ALONG THE PATH

By Nadine Boyd

Dear Compassionate Friends:

It is an old cliché that when young women compete in beauty pageants and they are asked what they hope to accomplish if they win the title, they usually reply that they hope to bring about world peace, end hunger and unemployment or other seemingly impossible goals.

As we enter a new year the world seems quite a dreary place to live in. There seems to be such hatred and anger toward others in the world, and frightening random violence. There seems to be little hope right now that anything will turn around. We are worried that the people in our government seem to focus on their own agendas and have very big obstacles to overcome to get our country back into shape.

Grieving families who have suffered the loss of a child have suffered the cruelest pain of all. We live in our own despair and the world seems a very dark place indeed. We wonder how we will get through the rest of our lives in this grief and pain. Losing a child is so different than any other kind of loss because not only have we lost our memories with our child, but we suffer the loss of future memories with our child. Any kind of future family event or milestone in our other children's lives are tainted with a little sadness because there is always someone missing, and we will never experience those milestone events with that someone.

So how do we get through this despair and darkness? The thought of living the rest of our lives without our child is unbearable. I think all we have in this world is God and each other. A friend who had also lost a child commented once that we have lived through the most horrible thing that can happen to us in this life by burying our child, and we are surviving. She commented that nothing much could compare to that, and we are stronger than we think. Jobs, homes, and friends can come or go (and do), but we know that we can survive. Our lives have changed forever, and our hearts are broken, but we can live with a broken heart. We are different now, but maybe kinder, more appreciative of those we love and more willing to reach out to others in pain. I've heard compassion defined as "your pain in my heart" and when another friend who has also lost a child says "I know how you feel" I truly know that they do. We give each other strength to go on.

As we enter a new year my prayer for you is that time softens your pain, heals your heart and you remember the love. I pray you have softer days and nights and less bad ones. I pray that your tears are more gentle. I pray that love for your child gives you comfort and healing, and hope that together we can walk this path to healing. We feel each other's pain in our hearts and we need not walk alone.

In friendship,

Nadine

