

PONDERINGS ALONG THE PATH

By Nadine Boyd

Dear Compassionate Friends:

The Christmas season is often called the season of light. It seems the whole world suffers through the dark, lonely winter days with hope and anticipation awaiting the light and celebration of Christmas. So it was for thousands of years as God's people waited for the Messiah to take them out of slavery and darkness. Scripture speaks often of light breaking through the darkness, and the Savior was called "Light of Light".

A single brilliant star was the first sign of that long awaited miracle to those wise men of long ago. They were curious enough to travel for many months and thousands of miles to find out what this new star meant, and to witness the miracle and the long awaited prophecy of a Messiah to bring light to the world.



Grieving families suffer through their own darkness, especially during this time of year when so much emphasis is put on giving thanks, celebration of family, traditions and memories. Sometimes grieving people may feel even more isolated and alone, and feel there is no place for us in this season of light, celebration of family and joy. We may feel we will never be happy or experience joy again, and we feel especially lonely in the darkness of our grief and loss.

A minister at the celebration of a friend's life once spoke about the light shining to earth from a far off star-that even though the star might have burnt out long ago its light continues on to earth, bringing light and beauty. So, too, even though our loved ones have gone on before us their life and light continue on in our hearts and memories. We grieve their loss, but remember the light and joy they brought us. We celebrate the "light" of their life and celebrate the love.

This season take the opportunity to light a candle to celebrate the light your loved one's life brought you, and continues to bring you. In the hushed quiet of the winter night, light a candle to honor your loved one; to pierce the darkness of our bitter loss, and bring hope and healing to our wounded hearts. Participating in one of our Compassionate Friends' memorial services and being with Friends who understand and share your pain and grief can be so comforting. If you are just not up to fellowship with Friends, find a quiet place where you can just be still with your feelings, thoughts or prayers. Talk to your loved one. Write him a letter telling him how much you love him and miss him. Donate a gift you may have bought for your loved one to a needy child or lonely teenager who thinks no one cares or feels he doesn't matter to anyone. Our Compassionate Friends chapter has donated gifts for many years in memory of our children to Family Services, and they have often commented what nice gifts we donate. Of course! They come from Heaven!

God has promised us that "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." The light from a single candle can overcome the darkness and isolation of our grief and loneliness.

This Christmas I wish you the blessings of light, comfort, healing, Friendship, and the "peace that passes all understanding".

In friendship,