



PONDERINGS ALONG THE PATH

Dear Compassionate Friends:

For many years on my grief journey and path to healing the end of the year meant only I didn't know how I could live through another year without my son. Another year of holidays, family get togethers, and memories made without him. It felt lonely and empty and hopeless. For most of Aaron's short life his fragile health determined how we spent our days, weekends and holidays and to suddenly lose those parameters left us floundering. I also felt I had lost part of my identity as a mom and primary health caregiver.

All I could imagine were the endless days without Aaron's sweet smile and funny little chuckle. Some days it felt overwhelming to try to make happy memories for my other sons; to paste on a smile and summon enthusiasm. Fake it till you make it!

I didn't know that motto then, but it is truly appropriate for grieving people. Our grief makes others uncomfortable, sometimes including our families. They want us to be "normal" and "all right" again. However, we have a new normal now; we will never be the same people we were before.

In the darkness of our grief, however, I have found that sometimes we get little signs or blessings from Heaven to encourage us and help us realize that our loved one made a difference in the world. He was loved and cherished not only by us, but others as well. These special angels may call or approach you at an especially low time and share a happy memory of your child or just let you know how much your child meant to them.

You may also have something happen that has special meaning to you and your child. An especially beautiful rainbow may appear after a storm. You might start finding pennies everywhere. My son and I loved rabbits and I saw them everywhere for a long time, including near his grave. They always made me smile and brought me comfort.

We have always kept Aaron's picture up in our home and always put the ornaments he made on the Christmas tree. We tried to keep him alive in our sons' memories because they were so young or not even born when Aaron left for Heaven.

Sometimes we will get an especially rare gift when someone will say "You had another child? Tell me about him." To those of us who lost our children when they were so young or so long ago this is especially precious.

In this new year count your blessings. Appreciate what a true blessing your loved ones are, whether they have gone on before you or still here with you on Earth. Yes, we grieve deeply for the loss of those we love deeply, but what a wonderful gift we were given to be able to love them forever, even if we held them in our arms for a very short time.

This year I wish for you many little unexpected gifts and blessings to bring you comfort, healing and "peace that passes all understanding" in the darkness of our grief and lack of hope.

We need not walk alone-we are The Compassionate Friends.

In friendship,
Nadine

