Reflection by Trish—Grief

Last week was All Saints and All Souls Day. We remembered our loved ones who have died. In recalling those individuals, we can experience some grief. When someone we care about dies, we are seldom ready no matter what the circumstances. We want to hold onto those dear to us even though our Christian faith tells us the objective of our existence is eventually to leave this earthly life and be united with God. We would take them back from God if we could, because we don't want to be here without them.

"Grief is not a disorder, a disease or a sign of weakness. It is an emotional, physical and spiritual necessity, the price you pay for love. The only cure for grief is to grieve. It is nature's way of healing a broken heart," wrote Rabbi Earl Grollman.

Grief is the acute pain that comes with loss when we have loved and cared. Grief is as natural as feeling pain when we stub our toe. It is not uncommon when we experience a loss to feel all the losses we have had. To remember all the deceased. In grief, we may experience a mix of feelings including sadness and loss along with anger, frustration, guilt and/or confusion. If we try to avoid our grief and our feelings, the grief process may be prolonged.

In our culture, grief is seldom discussed. There is no time limit on how long we will grieve. "The reality is that you will grieve forever. You will not 'get over' the loss of a loved one; you will learn to live with it. You will heal and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered. You will be whole again, but you will never be the same. Nor should you be the same nor would you want to," said Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, psychiatrist and scholar on death and dying.

Vicki Harrison wrote, "Grief is like the ocean; It comes in waves; ebbing and flowing. Sometimes the water is calm, and sometimes it is overwhelming. All we can do is learn to swim."

Grief is hard work. We may find we lack energy and are tired a great deal of the time. Our immune system may not be as strong for a short time. It is important to be gentle with ourselves. Know you need rest and just be in the moment.

Helen Keller said, "We bereaved are not alone. We belong to the largest company in all the world–the company of those who have known suffering."

Joan Chittister, Catholic Theologian wrote the following when Pope John Paul died, "Death deprives, but it also enriches. It makes us more reflective, more grateful for life, more aware of our debts to humanity, more conscious of the meaning of our own lives. Death is a very

vibrant thing. It makes us all begin together again, more grateful for one another than ever before."

When we loss someone, we often become more aware that life is tenuous. We may work harder to treasure the people around us and to enrich relationships. We can't take our time here for granted. We need to live intentionally and with purpose.

Here is **A PSALM FROM THE DECEASED-** by Fr. Edward M. Hayes

Relatives and friends, I have left you, my last breath did not say "goodbye," I left myself to your memory with love.

I left my thoughts, my laughter, my dreams to you whom I treasure beyond gold and precious gems.

I gave you what no thief can steal, the memories of our times together:

The tender, love-filled moments, successes we shared, the hard time that brought us close together, and the roads we walked side by side.

And all I took with me as I left is your love and the millions of memories of all that we shared.

So, I truly entered my new life as a millionaire.

Fear not nor grieve at my departure, you whom I loved so much FOR MY ROOTS AND YOURS ARE FOREVER INTERTWINED.