

December 2007/ January 2008

**THE MEANING OF THE
HOLIDAYS**

For those who think that Christmas and Hanukah are just nice days to give and get presents, bereaved parents have another message. Mixed with the joy is the knowledge of sadness. With the hope of birth comes the threat of death. We should not try to cover up our sadness in front of them. But the holidays have a lesson for us, too. Yes, there is death. Yes, there is a great bitterness in life. There is darkness. But there is hope. There is birth. There is light.

In a society which works so hard to deny death, perhaps only bereaved parents and a few others can truly understand the depths of these holidays.

*By Dennis Klass, TCF
St. Louis, MO*

**A LOSS BEFORE THE FIRST
CHRISTMAS**

I think the only thing sadder than looking back at Christmases that were and will never be again is having no Christmases to look back to at all. There are some people who believe it is easier to lose an infant than an older child, and I am sure that for some parts of grief, they are right, but this is not one of them.

Memories are painful, but they can be treasured, wonderful things that can help fill the emptiness. Christmas is one of the big expectations. Matter of fact, it is one of the reasons we have children. So, if our child dies before sharing a Christmas with us, we know we are missing something wonderful, but we don't know exactly what.

We will try as hard as we can, over and over again, to imagine our children on Christmas, but we cannot fabricate a

memory. We cannot see our child's face light up, or hear their sweet voices, or watch their movements. So the more we try, the more frustrated we become.

We hurt horribly, and we are empty, lonely and devastated. But because we did not have them long enough, most people (even ourselves, sometimes) will feel we have no right to grieve this Christmas.

So I've got to tell you, we have as much right and as many reasons to cry, and grieve as any parent whose child had died.

*By Laura Bouse
TCF Hardin County, Ohio*

THE CHRISTMAS ANGEL

We sing of them in Christmas carols,
We hang them on our tree,
But none could be as precious
As the ones we no longer see.

Hair so fine and eyes wide blue,
Their smiles filled with such delight,
How much we'd like to tell them once more
"We Love You" and hold them tight.

This Christmas they're in heaven
But perhaps they know anyway
How much they're loved and missed,
And that they'll always be
Our little Christmas angels.

Author Unknown

*The above poems were reprinted from the
Newsletter from the Greater Omaha TCF
Chapter, Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec, 2001*

**HIS FIRST CHRISTMAS IN
HEAVEN**

Dear Lord, please let him help trim
Heaven's tree!

He has not been away from home before.
On Christmas Eve. Each year with eager
hands.

He hung the holly wreath upon the door.

But most of all he liked to place the star
Upon the highest, tip top branch of the
tree.

And put a shining angel underneath.
He loved the Christmas songs, the
festivity,

So Lord, if you would let him hang the
star –

He is very tall, or place the angel's light,
Or maybe drape the silver tinsel on,
He would feel more at home tonight!

*By Emily Carely Alleman
Fox Valley TCF, Aurora.IL
Another Year of Healing 1988-1992*

COMMUNITY FRIENDS ANNUAL MEMORIAL EVENT

December 20, 2007 7:00PM

Madonna Hospital

Please feel free to bring your own candle
and a picture of your precious child.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNUAL REMEMBRANCES

- can be difficult
days for bereaved parents and siblings.
Perhaps you would like to lift them up in
thought and prayer as these difficult days
approach for them.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Aubrea Carman	12-09-1986
Megan Elizabeth Churchill	12-12-1991
Wendy Notebloom Ewell	12-17-1974
Chad Hunt	12-24- 1967
James Smith	12-23- 1980
Joseph Tlamka	12-19- 2003

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Avery Jean Arguello	01-31-2002
Ryan Lamberty	01-26- 1972

Virginia Rose Peterson	01-20- 2004
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DECEMBER ANNUAL REMEMBRANCES

Tadd Q. Ellis	12-26-1996
Quavariyum Caleb Lee Haiferty	12-11-2006
Jenna Henke	12-25-2005
Corina Marie Krieser	12-22-2001
Johna Jaye Kozak	12-26-2006

JANUARY ANNUAL REMEMBRANCES

Avery Jean Arguello	01-31- 2002
Greggy Robert Bayless	01-31-2005
Elise LaRae Byler	01-20-1998
Ila Gronethal	01-17- 2004
Virginia Rose Peterson	01-20- 2004
Lucas "Luke" Saathoff	01-04-2007
Joseph Tlamka	01-19-2004

In remembering our precious children, there
may be errors or omissions for which I am
deeply sorry. If there are any errors, please
contact Trish Schuster at 402-673-5395 or
trish_schuster@yahoo.com. If you have
attended a meeting, and have not filled out a
database giving us permission to print your
child's birthdays and annual remembrance
please let Trish know.

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS

Beyond the Christmas trees, the angels
and stars and beloved carols...beyond
the presents, the shopping, the baking
and cooking...beyond all of these sights
and sounds of Christmas...beyond all of
these *..there is hope.*

*Hope..*for the bereaved parent, even at
Christmas, one of the most, if not the
most, painful times of the year, there is
an essence of *hope. Hope...*it is hope
that sustains us through the days of grief
and anger and frustration and loneliness.

The **hope** is that someday the pain of the deaths of our children will be eased. The **hope** is that someday our smiles will be real. The **hope** is that once again we will laugh and love and cry without completely without fear and hollowness. It is the **hope** that someday we can remember our children with a tenderness merely tinged with sorrow and not overwhelmed with it.

So it is that for each of you I would **hope**... peace, compassion, love, sympathy, understanding, sharing and listening. In the sharing with one another and in the emotional support we give to one another, we receive and understand all of these gifts.

By Terre Haute, In
TCF Wabash Valley Chapter

“Hope isn’t a place or a thing. Hope isn’t the absence of pain or sadness or sorrow. Hope is possibility. Hope is the memory of love given and loved received.”

By Darci Sims

A GIFT FOR SURVIVING CHILDREN

“The most important gift you can give your children at this time is the feeling that life continues despite pain. Death, “the loss of innocence”, can either lead you the to edge of the abyss and threaten your existence with meaningless and futility, or you will start to build the bridge that spans the chasm with things of life that still count—memory, family, friendship, love.”

By Earl Grollman from TALKING ABOUT DEATH; DIALOGUE BETWEEN PARENT AND CHILD

***May you have
The Spirit of Christmas***

***Which is Peace,
The Gladness of Christmas,
Which is Hope,
The Heart of Christmas,
Which is Love.***

SUGGESTIONS FOR NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTIONS

- *I will try not to expect so much understand from others who have not walked the same path.
- *I will try to be kind to myself – health, appearance, and time to be alone.
- *I will remember that I owe it to myself to try to enjoy life.
- *I will try to be more considerate of my remaining loved ones. They too are coping and deserve my help.
- *I resolve, in memory of my loved one, to do something to help someone else, for I know that in doing this my loved one will live on, through me.

Adapted from TCF Newsletter, The HOPE Line, January 1990, Mobile, AL

A PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

*Where there is pain,
Let there be softening
Where there is bitterness
Let there be acceptance.
Where there is silence
Let there be communication
Where there is loneliness
Let there be friendships
Where there is despair
Let there be hope.*

By Ruth Elseman
TCF, Louisville, KY

“May your heart be filled with warm memories and the assurance that loved never dies, this holiday season!!”