

November- Alzheimer's Disease **Awareness**

Do you feel the pain of the person with Alzheimer's disease who wrote the poem on the other side of this insert? The individual who has Alzheimer's disease is still a person with feelings, no matter how confused, how forgetful or how different their behaviors become. They are still a person who needs to be loved and reminded that God loves them.

A person with Alzheimer's needs the same things we all need: to feel loved; to have people to talk to; to feel safe; to be hugged or touched in appropriate ways; to be part of a faith community; and to feel God's presence.

When persons with Alzheimer's feel forsaken by God, it is up to the faith community to be the word made flesh – to share God's love through the ministry of presence; through the Sacraments; by worshiping together; by visiting; and by extending the hand of friendship, respect, love and hope.

Sometimes people are afraid of things they don't understand. Help the faith community understand Alzheimer's and talk about how the congregation can become more Alzheimer's friendly. Design a plan of action and prepare to minister to this growing segment of the population.

Persons with Alzheimer's have a spiritual connection and source of strength we may not understand. Listen and learn from them. Encourage them to express their feelings as long as they can through writing, art or simply talking about their journey.

When the person with Alzheimer's and their caregiver no longer feel comfortable or are unable to attend congregational activities, do not forget them. More than ever, they need the faith community to be the hands of God.

Pat Carver, Scottsdale, AZ

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An Alzheimer's Patient's Point Of View

Dear Friend,
Oh, how can this be
You and I are losing me.
Some day soon
Maybe morning, Maybe noon
I will no longer be the me
You and I know as me.
I ask, what is happening to me,
And the answer seems to be
Words and thoughts frequently scramble
And my conversations seem to ramble.
O, how can this be
You and I are losing me.
What do you see when you look into my eyes?
And neighbors just to pry?
Confusion, hurt, pity and pain,
For I am ill and not insane.
Oh Lord, help me pray,
And this is what He seems to say,
"Fear not child, I will come and take you home,
To be with me for all eternity.
What can we do from losing me?
"Nothing' say the experts.
But in my confused and foggy state,
To you I plea,
"Love me,
Remember me
Help me to be
All that I can be
For as long as I can be
The me we know as me."

By Janis Hogan Aplin

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