

## **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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