
***I walked a mile with Pleasure; She
chattered all the way,
But left me none the wiser. For all she
had to say.
I walked a mile with sorrow; And ne'er a
word said she;
But, oh, the things I learned from her,
When Sorrow walked with me!***

-Robert Browning Hamilton

Adapted from materials of the
National Catholic
Bereavement Ministry

If you or a loved one is grieving,
please contact the parish office to
see what resources are available to you.



CATHOLIC
DIOCESE *of* RALEIGH

How Will I Know I'm Feeling Better?

CATHOLIC GRIEF SUPPORT SERIES



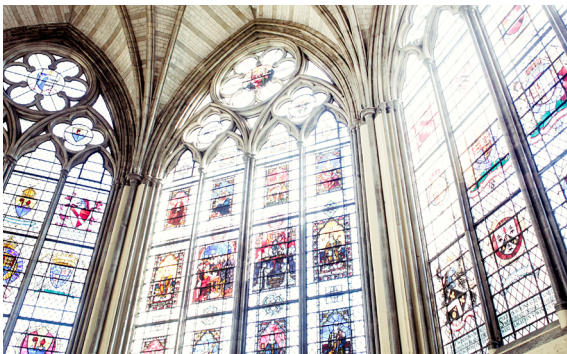
Bereavement Ministry Leader Support
ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF RALEIGH

How Will I Know I'm Feeling Better?

The question only you can answer.

The best answer to your question, "How will I know when I am feeling better?" is one only you can answer for yourself. You'll probably find you can now get through a conversation about your loved one without crying. The pain of the loss is less intense. Seeing someone who talks, walks, or looks like your loved one doesn't upset you like it did in the beginning. Your ability to enjoy the holidays again, to start having more energy and less irritability, and to be able to reinvest your emotions back into life again indicate you are on your way. You may feel as though you take one step forward and two steps back, but you will gradually move ahead.

As you journey on, you'll probably experience something called "anniversary reactions." On the anniversary of the day your loved one died, for example, you may feel sad, irritable, and restless. This is normal, and anniversary reactions may happen for some time into the future.



You may also experience deep sadness when special events such as a graduation, baptism, or a wedding takes place, even far in the future; these are times when you will naturally wish your loved one could be with you.



Key points to remember:

- **You will begin to notice that you are able to enjoy holidays again and have more energy.**
- **Anniversary reactions are normal and expected.**
- **You may experience sadness at events that are supposed to be happy.**
- **Mourning is the outward expression of your grief and is an important part of the grief process.**

***May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.
Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.***

Psalm 126:5-6

Your unconscious mind keeps track of these events, even if you aren't conscious of them. It is important to acknowledge these feelings. You may want to do something special; for example, place a flower on the altar in memory of your loved one during a special ceremony. An intentional action such as this, at times termed as mourning, is an important part of the grieving process. Mourning is the outward expression of your grief and can be done by crying or journaling, or sharing memories.

As you continue on, it is important to reflect on some questions that can shape and guide your future such as:

- What have I learned from this experience?
- How have I changed?
- What is my future?
- Where have I seen God working?

It may be helpful to write your answers to these questions in a journal and periodically check back and re-answer them.



Praise God for the physical and mental strength to come down this long and difficult path. May God live in and through your life, transforming it into his glory.