



St. John Fisher Whole Community Project

Ascension, May 11/12, 2013

In the readings we see similarities in the responses from the angels at the empty tomb and the Ascension as they question, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" (Easter Vigil, Luke 24:5) and "Why are you standing there looking at the sky?" (Acts 1:10-11). There is the traditional teaching that sometimes our loved ones are closer to us after they have died than before. Their lives on earth may have been marked by various pressures on the relationship they had with us: personality conflicts, financial problems, job stresses, and addictions to alcohol or drugs. Even the most loving relationship can be strained by lack of time or proximity.

What is your own experience when a family member or friend dies?

What do you experience as we let go of physicality?

Age group: 36 - 50+

What is your own experience when a family member or friend dies?

- ✳ Feeling of profound loss with a painful readjustment period of resetting my life
- ✳ A new and different presence – I'm very aware of them
- ✳ I felt sad to not be able to see them, however their presence remained and still remains with me. For me, they live on through the love that was shared through our relationship.
- ✳ Sadness at their loss from my daily life but relief and comfort at their freedom from suffering, pain, and entry into the Promised Land.
- ✳ There is a sense of being "closer" both to the individual as well as the family/group of friends. Time of "remembering" and usually positive memories.
- ✳ A crater forms in my heart – empty, wide, and un-fillable.
- ✳ My experience is a sense of relief that their suffering is over. Then grief takes over – a very real physical, mental, and spiritual grief. How can this hole in my life ever heal or be filled. Then eventually I arrive at a sense of gratefulness for having had this person in my life.

✳ Loss of a loved one's physical presence is reason for grieving; but good memories bring peace. It is important to build good memories during one's lifetime, as they are everlasting and don't allow "what might have been". Those we love never leave us, for the memory we have of them lives forever in our hearts. "Remember the best...forget the rest."

What do you experience as we let go of physicality?

- ✳ Profound freedom and profound loss
- ✳ A deeper experience of the heart
- ✳ An expansion of energy which moves from person to person no matter how far we are physically apart.
- ✳ I miss the person and miss not being able to see them or talk to them.
- ✳ Freedom to relate to the family member/friend at the same time - Loss of the presence – closeness and learning new ways to retrieve that closeness.
- ✳ A quiet desperation to hold onto anything physically connected to my loved one.

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✿ I see my loved one's priorities change or become more pronounced as they near death. Family and relationships become prime. A sense of peace settles as they let go of everyday concerns.

✿ There is a certain sadness at the loss of physical abilities, but there is also the realization that this is the rhythm of life. It is another reason to seize the day and build good memories...and do good works. This day only comes once in a lifetime, so make the most of it.