

LAMENTATIONS

Issue 13

S.U.C.C.E.S.S

October 1993

October

October is a month of transitions; a change or passing from one state, stage, style, or season to another. There are many different **stages** or **seasons** in **October**. The days are still warm, but the nights become much cooler, even cold by the end of the month. We usually have our first frost and farmers are busy harvesting their crops before the cold weather "sets in."

As is usually the situation, this reminds me of the different "seasons" of our grief. In the beginning, we are so numb and in such a state of denial and shock that we only feel the warmth of others. As the grieving progresses, we become more sober and begin to feel the "frost" of grief. It may come and go, but it is not there constantly. When we are in the middle of this season of grief, we have a mixture of "warm" days followed by cold days, and vice versa. As we get in the darkest part of our grief we are feeling the "cold" reality that our loved one is dead, and this stage seems to be there day and night. This is the biting cold. Maybe that is where we observe **Halloween**.

Halloween developed from ancient new year festivals and festivals of the dead. In the 800's AD. the church established All Saints' Day on November 1 so that people could continue a festival they had celebrated before becoming Christians. The Mass that was said on this day was called *Allhallowmas*. The evening before became known as All *Hallowe'en*, or **Halloween**. Some of the many different symbols or rituals of **Halloween** are **Jack-o'-lanterns**, **trick-or-treating**, and **bobbing for apples**.

Jack-o'-lanterns are hollowed-out pumpkins with an artificial face. We are certainly

"hollowed-out" from our great loss, and haven't you found yourself with an "artificial face" because you don't want people to see how really hollow and empty you are inside?



Trick-or-treating is the custom of dressing in costumes and going from door to door asking each person if they want a "**trick**" or a "**treat**". Wouldn't life have been different if we could have been asked, prior to our loved one's death, if we wanted a "trick" or a "treat"? (Another one of those "**If onlys**")

In Doug Manning's book, *Comforting Those Who Grieve*, he relates the story of a seminary professor who was disturbed about a student sleeping in his class. When the student was finally awakened by the stares of the professor, the professor asked, "Why is there evil and suffering in the world?" The student answered, "I-I-I well, I used to know the answer to that, but I forgot." The professor then turned his attention to the class and said, "Mark this day well, for in the history of the world there have only been two people who have known the answer to this question. One was Jesus, and he did not tell us. The other was this young man, and he forgot it."

Bobbing for apples is like our grief. The more we try to push the grief down so we won't see it, the higher it seems to "pop up."



The only way we can truly get that **apple** is by grabbing hold of it and eating **it** rather than it eating us.

Let's "harvest" our crops by reading as much as we can about grief and facing grief head on so that we will not lose our "crop" (grief work) to the cold weather (denial).

Grief Grafts

On September 4th my Mother passed away at the age of 81. Due to poor health, she had been wanting to die for several years, and especially since my Father died December 14, 1992. Now as I look at my life, I realize that we lost our future when Young Jim died, and now that both my parents have died, I have also lost my past. It is a sobering revelation. Chuck Dupier, who is a very dear friend of ours, spoke at her funeral as he had at our son's and my Father's. He read several of Mother's poems including her *Philosophy of Life*:

It seems to me that life should be lived as a great adventure, each day opens up a new chapter of experiences and opportunities, and ending in a fuller understanding of God and His will for us yet with enough unanswered questions and unsolved problems to make us eager to get on to another chapter. And then, after the last chapter the promise: "To be continued - in another book!"

He ended the service with these words "And so, she's left us behind but not without a poem to comfort us:"

*I do not know how life shall end
And neither do I need to know.
He'll be there to take my hand
And lead wherever I should go.*

*I do not know when He will call
And say: "I'll come to take you soon"
It may be winter, summer, fall –
Or in the morning, night, or noon.*

*I only know that all the while
I need be ready for that day,
So I can hear: "well done, my child,
I'm here to take you all the way. "*

Margaret T Lynch
5/31/12 - 9/4/93

For the first anniversary of Jason Barker's death (8-31-92), his father Gary wrote this in their church's newsletter:

Lament for Jason

A woman was walking down the sidewalk to the store. As she passed by an open field, she saw a young boy standing there with his hands together, as if he were praying, looking up into the sky. Her curiosity rose, but she went on to the store. About an hour later the woman returned, and as she approached the open field, again she saw the young boy, still standing in the same spot with his hands.

together, still looking up into the sky. Her curiosity finally got the best of her and she walked over to the boy and said, "son, what are you doing" He said to her, "I am flying my kite." She looked up and said. "Well. I don't see it." (He had been there for a long time and the kite was way up in the sky) He said to her, "Neither do I" She said "Well, how do you know it's there)" He said. "Because I can feel the pull on the string"

That's sort of how it is with Chris and me. Both of us can still feel the pull on the string". That string is the love that connects us to Jason. That string is the bond that still connects us to him. Even though we cannot see Jason, we still feel the pull and we are grateful to God that we do feel that way every day.

Candice, 3-year-old daughter of Elizabeth and Victor Watkins, was tragically killed by a gunshot May 27, 1993. Candice's symbol is a rosebud. Elizabeth wrote this poem:

Let's Talk

"Come take a walk with me" she said: as she held out her tiny hand

"Let me show you where I've gone: It's such a beautiful, peaceful land."

And as we walked, she smiled and talked of happiness so true.

She said, "If only you could see this place, then you could never be down or blue."

"I know you miss me as I miss you and I know the pain runs deep. If only I could show you this wonderful place I keep."

"Tell everyone down there I love them and my memory forever will live on, and please tell them I'll be up here waiting for when good Lord calls them home."

Tommy and Gina Wright's 4-year-old son Drew was killed in a tragic accident June 16, 1993. The following tribute was written by the Pastor's wife and it was read at Drew's funeral:

*This the Drew I knew,
A bundle of joy in a little boy,
Small in body, BIG in heart,
The Sunday School programs, always taking part.
Singing happily in the choir
Using the microphone if one was there.
Shaking hands or giving "five, "
Smiling sweet, warming hearts,
Sitting on the organ bench, pretending to play before
the music starts.
Watching J.G. keep time with the music,
Sometimes imitating his actions,
Passing around the offering plate
With "Pap" standing close by.
Sometimes when he wasn't using the microphone,
He would play on the tambourine.*

At times, on his way to class, he would stop by the organ to shake my hand.

*A very SPECIAL little DREW,
We will always remember you,
Many, many lives you have touched,
Memories if you will always be a SPECIAL part of this church.*

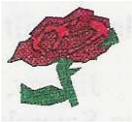
Betty Hackler

(The zeal and love for church that Drew possessed, and the joy he brought in these four years, will continue to be a source of inspiration to all who were privileged to know and love him)

Loretta Deso has also known great tragedy. Her husband was killed when their only child, Linda was 12 years old. Linda died of cancer July 28, 1988, at the age of 46, after battling the disease for 4 years. Linda loved older people so much and always went out of her way to help them. Roses and poodles are Linda's symbols.



Don and Connie Little's daughter Jessica died of a pulmonary embolism October 11, 1991. She was a junior at Syracuse University majoring in Psychology. Jessica was happy and outgoing. She made friends easily and was the first to offer help to anyone in need. A rose also symbolizes Jessica.



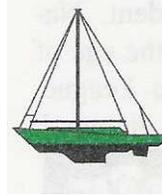
Jack Aronson's 23-year-old son Tom was killed in a motorcycle accident September 18, 1983. Bruce Bennet, Tom's best friend wrote and read the following poem at Tom's funeral:

Tommy

*Thank you so much, Tommy
For everything you've done
I can't thank you enough*

*Just wish I'd told you before you'd gone.
He loved to ride his "Pantah"
And he loved to ride It fast
He loved to live his life
It's a shame it did not last.
And so farewell to our brother
And to our ever-loyal friend
For I know he waits in heaven
Where we all shall meet again.*

Jack Miller, another friend of Tom's, has a new son and has named him after Tom. In memory of Tom, a sailing scholarship, which is



matched by the local boat club, is given to two people each year. The recipients must be recommended by school officials and have families who are unable to provide participation because of finances. The recipients must have good character, poise and the personality to mix with other members of the Junior Sailing Program.

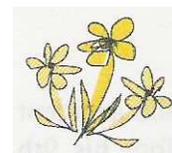
Joanne Chapman loved animals, and when she was killed in an auto accident July 18, 1992, her friends and family made donations to the local animal shelter in her memory. Joanne was the 18-year-old daughter of Bonnie Chapman. Bonnie is also interested in establishing a scholarship at the high school in Joanne's memory.



We also lost a very dear friend of ours, Sandy, who was the 34-year-old daughter of Don and Janice Adkins. Sandy died of cancer September 2, 1993. She was a wonderful teacher and beloved by her students. She was also an avid collector of apples, so the perfect symbol for Sandy has to be an apple.



Samantha, the twin sister of Sabrina, and the 6-year-old daughter of John and Carrie Blanton, died May 28, 1992. Carrie writes: "Samantha had just been promoted to the second grade. Little did the family know that she was going to receive a "bigger" promotion - to be with God. Samantha is no longer with us in person, but her little laughter and voice will always echo through the house."



The family keeps her memory alive by talking about the things she loved to do. The family has chosen a daisy to represent Samantha because she loved them.

Mark and Sandra Crippen have been married 10 years. They feel that God gave them each other because of the many things they would have to face in the future. Sara Crippen, Mark's daughter, died October 17, 1991, from a melanoma. Exactly 8 months later, Nathan Stokes, Sandra's son, died on June 17, 1992. They were both 22 when they died. His death was the result of a



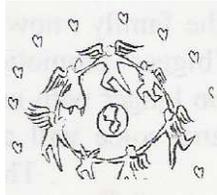
Marine Corps training accident. Nathan played baseball from the age of 7 and also coached Little League. His symbol is a baseball diamond. Sandra wrote that Sara loved life and was beautiful inside and out. Her symbol is a Christmas angel.



Michael and Susan Kauffmann's 16-year-old daughter Kristie died of Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy March 6, 1993. This is the same disease that killed the famous Reggie Lewis. Kristie was very athletic and played all sports in grade school, and was on the cross country team in high school. Her symbol is an angel.



Curtis and Debbi Dickinson have lost 3 babies which were miscarried in the 2nd trimester of pregnancy: Junior - 12/24/80; Kimberly Melissa - 8/25/87; and Angel Winter Dawn - 12/25/89. After their third loss, Debbi went through a battery of tests and found that she had "antiphospholipid syndrome," which prevents her from carrying babies to term. As a result, Debbi has become very active in informing others of this disease by writing articles, newspaper interviews and giving lectures. She has published her first book of poetry, *Whispers in the Wind*, which is dedicated to her babies. It can be requested by sending \$4 (handling/postage included) to Debbi Dickinson, 876 Springhill Circle, Naperville, IL 60563. The Dickinsons have chosen angels and hearts for their babies.



Mitch Warren died in an automobile accident May 21, 1993, the day before his 9th birthday. His parents, Dave and Carol, have selected a star to represent Mitch because he was the "sparkling star" in their family. Meg Peavy, a family friend who taught Mitch to play tennis, wrote this poem:

My little Friend had golden spiked hair and insisted on being first in line...to play, to run, to laugh at all life had to offer. Clattering about all arms and legs; wearing his hats backwards...

His style was original and fresh, his mannerisms filled with warmth and good naturedness; the smiling face a glow with the light of innocence and joy.

Running hither and yon from one sport to the next, this boy relished the chances given to him in the game of life!

Everyone was a Friend of his - this shy, witty, bubbly, fellow now lives in our memories and in our hearts.

Mitch's memory is being kept alive at his elementary school. The school raised money and redid the lobby with new wooden benches with eagles on them and a plaque. The school will also be giving an award every year during basketball season to someone with "lots" of spirit and determination. (This is because Mitch would never give up.) Their church initiated a memorial recreational fund, and has purchased a trophy case where a special plaque will be placed in Mitch's memory.



Jimmy, the 15-year-old son of Greg and Margie Scieszka, was killed by a drunk driver while riding his bike home on June 26, 1986. He was an outstanding athlete and an excellent student. As a result of Jimmy's death, Margie has developed post-traumatic stress syndrome, and has not yet been able to start grieving for him. She is interested in talking with anyone who may have this same problem, or has any extended denial. Her address is: RD 1, Box 1210, Manchester Center, VT 05255. 802-362-1980.

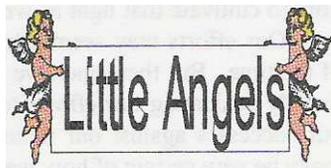
Monica, the 19-year-old daughter of Hershel and Judy Haste, died April 3, 1993. She had Cerebral Palsy, but had been relatively healthy until she had had dental surgery. Monica had the mental capacity of a 16-month-old, so she was always their "baby." Judy writes that she and Monica grew up together because Judy was only 17 when Monica was born. The family has engraved "Heaven's Special Child" on her stone, and is spending their spare time restoring an old church (Est. 1824) in Monica's memory. A dove symbolizes Monica.



Dr. Becky Powell writes that their son Justin was born on Mother's Day (5/1 0/81); was hit by a car on Good Friday and died on Easter (4/11/93). "I do not believe that all of this was coincidental. I feel it is God's way of telling us that our lives do

indeed have a purpose and that every life is a precious gift. A few months after Justin's death, a close friend reminded me that I now have a great deal of extra energy that was formerly reserved for our son. How will I use it? I have been struggling with the answers to this question, trying to discover what purpose God has for my life, trying to listen to my inner 'spiritual voice.'... I am able to accept the reality of Justin's untimely death, because I know that time is ultimately meaningless. God's purpose for our lives does not always require time. I have also come to realize that without pain, we can never know joy." Becky is keeping a photo album of "Little Angels." She would like for each of you, if you wish, to send her photos of your loved one to include in the album. Her address is:

Dr. Becky Powell,
198 Woodwind Court,
Nicholasville, KY 40356.



Jennifer Sexton, a professor at Cumberland College lost both of her parents within a year of each other. Her Father died of lung cancer in 1990, one day before their golden wedding anniversary. Her Mother died of throat cancer September 6, 1991. Jennifer said that she was not a bereaved parent, but she was a bereaved daughter. Jennifer has selected yellow roses to represent her parents because they were her Mother's favorite flower.



Sharon Rich's son Lynn was born on his sister's birthday, two years later. Sharon says that Lynn was a very sensitive child. He had joined the service at 18 to get money for college. He knew that she would be upset that he had joined, so he had traveled to California to tell her before he was "shipped out." On October 15, 1982, while stationed in Germany, Lynn was killed in a tragic auto accident. Two weeks after his death, Sharon received a card from him saying:

*Days go slow and days go fast
But never a day goes by
that I don't think of you.
Love always and forever*

Jill, the 17-year-old daughter of Oscar and Leola Cole, was killed in an automobile accident May 24, 1992, two days after she graduated from high school. These words were written in her Eulogy: "Jill was a friendly and caring person, cheering others up when they were feeling low. Her sweet spirit and her sense of humor radiated. Her strong, moral teaching at home was evidenced in the relationships that she had with others. Jill seemed to enjoy sparking conversation as she challenged others, particularly adults, with her unique kind of inquisitiveness." The Coles enjoy a picture they have of Jim when she was six years of age. She is sitting in a field of flowers. "We can all envision Jill now in heaven, a flower in God's kingdom." A sunshine represents Jill.



Buddy, the son of Richard and June Cunningham, died August 28, 1986, after a long journey of recovery from a motorcycle accident. June writes that the 4 years that they had with Buddy after his accident were good years in which the family all grew closer. Buddy had studied Karate for four years and had obtained a second degree brown belt. He had also enjoyed weight lifting. The family has selected a butterfly to represent Buddy.



Springer and Anne Hoskins' son Jim was killed in a mountain climbing accident 6-13-93. A clapstick represents Jim because he wrote and produced educational films. He wrote the following:

ON BEING OURSELVES

Somewhere, in a suburban home, a shy, awkward, gangly teenager listens to a rock and roll record alone in his bedroom. As the music plays, he dances, jumps, spins, leaps around the room, thrashing at an imaginary guitar, singing off-key to the music

As far as he's concerned, he's fantasizing, pretending he's someone other than himself But that kid leaping about the room is him. That kid, usually so shy and self-conscious around other people, is, in this brief moment, just being himself He doesn't realize it, but in this moment, he's getting a taste of exactly what God intends for him. in this moment, he is what God wants him to be A human being in love with life, tlowing with life. He is temporarily freed from his self-consciousness, he's not comparing himself to others, he's not concerned with how well he's doing, he's not in competition with anyone else, he isn't thinking in terms of failure or

success. He isn't thinking anything, really. There isn't a malicious thought in his body, he isn't dwelling on his future, either fearfully or hopefully, he is envying no one. He desires nothing in this moment, not because all his desires have been met, but because he has transcended desire entirely.

In this brief moment, he is so full of life that he is connected to every other living being. He is in harmony with life.

Suddenly, his mother opens the bedroom door, and the moment is gone, instantly evaporated. The kid immediately stops his dancing, and stands silently, shifting back and forth on his feet, as his mother chastises him for playing his stereo so loudly. He's filled with embarrassment and anger, and with a vague feeling of disappointment, as if he's just been awakened in the middle of a great dream.

Probably all of us have experienced such brief, glorious moments from time to time, whether it came from dancing, watching a sunset, or successfully completing a challenging, difficult task. And many of us have consciously wished that such moments could occur more often. But, sadly, just as that kid has let his true self be stifled so abruptly by the presence of another person, so do each of us regularly, continually give in to forces whereby we stifle the bright, beautiful light that is our true Self, and which shines so rarely in so many of us.

We stifle ourselves when we willfully conform to a group for the sake of security, safety, and a sense of belonging, when we fail to speak out against the status quo for fear of being ostracized or persecuted.

We stifle ourselves by looking outside of ourselves to a career or social status to provide us with some sense of identity.

We stifle ourselves when we cling to an "Us-Against-Them" mentality, when we insist on seeing certain people, or groups of people, as the enemy which must be conquered. By giving in to such feelings of hostility, we necessarily alienate ourselves from whole segments of the human race, which is to alienate ourselves from God.

We stifle ourselves not only with drugs and alcohol, but with food, television, mindless chores, even seemingly worthwhile pursuits, anything which will distract us from the sometimes lonely and painful process of offending ourselves.

And we stifle ourselves when we refuse to "accept and admit our vulnerability, our weaknesses, our brokenness, our complete and utter dependence on God.

But it is one of our great challenges as disciples of Christ to be continually resisting these stifling forces, and to cultivate the spark of Life that is inside each of us, that is our true self. As Thomas Merton once wrote, "To be a saint is to be myself. Therefore the problem of sanctity and salvation is in fact the problem of finding out who I am and of discovering my true self. There is only one problem on which all my existence, my peace and my happiness depend: to discover myself in discovering God. If I find Him I will find myself and if I find my true self I will find Him.

No small task, to be sure. And an even greater challenge at times lies in trying to cultivate that spark in others.

One of the more distasteful burdens which falls on Christians is acknowledging and recognizing the true self that is hidden in the people we sometimes hate, from jerks who cut us off in heavy traffic to friends who violently betray us, to the leaders of nations who so callously sacrifice their own citizens as pawns in their political power struggles. It's not an easy thing to do, and few of us, if any, ever fully meet that challenge. It was only after years of diligent, disciplined monasticism that Thomas Merton could stand on a busy street corner and suddenly, joyfully recognize his love for everyone he saw, realizing that they all shared in the glory of being members of the human race, "a member of the race in which God himself became incarnate."

Merton went on to lament, "If only everybody could realize this! But it cannot be explained. There is no way of telling people that they are walking around shining like the sun." No, there isn't. But whether they (or we) can see that shining light in themselves or not, it is our calling, our vocation, to cultivate that light as we can, in ourselves and in others. Our efforts may seem utterly futile and hopeless much of the time. But then again we aren't really called to be continually evaluating our efforts to be measuring and weighing our successes against our failures. After all, we can never really be very certain of how well we're coming along.

But we can at least recognize that that glorious Self does indeed lie within each one of us, just waiting to be freed from all our illusions, pretensions, and inhibitions, freed from all boundaries. One definition of Heaven might be that place where we are all joyfully and eternally dancing, leaping, spinning about, playing a guitar, and playing it flawlessly.

**S.U.C.C.E.S.S
IS TO BE MEASURED
NOT SO MUCH BY THE POSITION
THAT ONE HAS REACHED IN LIFE AS
BY THE OBSTACLE
WHICH HE HAS OVERCOME
WHILE TRYING TO SUCCEED.**

Booker T. Washington



Dear God
Roses are Red
Chocolate is Brown Life is
difficult . . . Help my feet
touch the ground!

(As you can tell, I am in a
"stew" for a rhyme)

So - o - o - o - o

Let's eat chocolate!!!!

(That will make it "all" better)