

Walking Wounded

A couple had been married for twelve years. They raised three children, built a home, and ran a business. “But”, the wife wrote, “we didn’t really know each other.”

They were committed, but hadn’t worked at the compatibility factor when tragedy struck. Ed, their “best man” and close friend didn’t survive the open-heart surgery he had to face.

“Neither of us had ever handled pain of such magnitude. We were devastated by Ed’s death.”

“Bill, my husband went off by himself. I gathered my friends around me. They shared my shock and expressed compassion. But even with that, I was not comforted.”

She tells of passing the bedroom door late one afternoon. Her husband was sitting slumped on the edge of the bed, a silhouette in the darkened room. He was totally alone.

What does one say? Each was locked in their aloneness until she heard him murmur. “We used to play in the dirt together in the alley behind the garage.” She added, “He arranged our first date.”

“Slowly, awkwardly, with tears streaming down our faces, we finally reached out. Neither of us knew the strength we had to give, but here we were willing to share with each other.”

Each was vulnerable, and out of the darkness they shared their vulnerability. “On that evening”, she wrote, “we admitted we couldn’t handle life alone. We needed each other.”

The myth of merriment in our society often triggers deep feelings of vulnerability and we feel more isolated than ever.

Alone, we are the walking wounded. But when we share with a loved one or a spiritual mentor we find the wounds are not so deep and we are not alone.

“In the empty cave of grieving, in the desert of my dreams, in the tunnel of my sorrow, you are there, Lord, you are there.” (Hymn by Julie Howard)

(written by Joyce Sasse December '09)