



Celebrating Eternal Life

A COLLECTION
OF POEMS & PRAYERS

by the

*St. James/St. Thomas
Grief Support Group*





Dear God,

*Grant me the serenity to accept
the things I cannot change;
Courage to change the
things I can;
And wisdom to
know the difference.*



Prayer to St. Joseph

Saint Joseph, whose protection is so great, so strong, so prompt before the Throne of God, I place in you, all my interests and desires.

Oh, Saint Joseph, do assist me by your powerful intercession, and obtain for me, from your Divine Son, all spiritual blessings, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. So that having engaged here below your heavenly power, I may offer my thanksgiving and homage to the most loving of fathers.

Oh, Saint Joseph, I never weary of contemplating you, and Jesus asleep in your arms. I dare not approach, while He reposes near your heart. Press Him in my name, and kiss His fine head for me, and ask Him to return the kiss when I draw my dying breath.

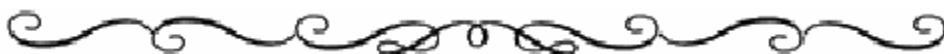
Saint Joseph, Patron of Departing Souls, pray for us...

Amen

Lord,

Grant that we may hold dear the memory of your servant, never bitter for what we have lost nor in regret of the past, but always in hope of the eternal kingdom where you will bring us together again. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

Amen



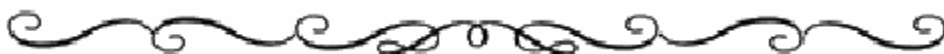


God Saw You Getting Tired

*"God saw you getting tired
and a cure was not meant to be.
So He put His arms around you
and He said "Come to me."
With tearful eyes,
we watched you pass away.
Although we loved you dearly
we could not make you stay.
A golden heart stopped beating,
hard working hands at rest.
God broke our hearts
to prove to us,
He only takes the best."*



*God looked around his garden,
And he found an empty place,
He then looked down upon this earth,
And saw your tired face.
He put his arms around you and lifted you to rest,
God's garden must be beautiful,
He only takes the best.
He knew you were suffering,
He knew you were in pain,
He knew you would never get well on earth again.
So he closed your weary eyelids, and whispered,
"Peace be thine."
It broke our hearts to lose you,
But you did not go alone,
A part of us went with you,
The day God called you home.*



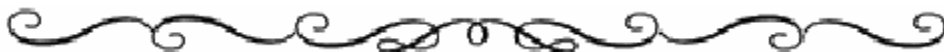


WHAT GOD HAS PROMISED ~

*God has not promised skies always blue,
flower strewn pathways all our lives through.
God has not promised sun without rain,
joy without sorrow, peace without pain.*

*But God has promised strength for the day,
rest for the laborer,
light on the way,
grace for the trial,
help from above,
unfailing sympathy,
undying love.*

~ Annie Johnson Flint ~





And God Said:

*I said, "God, I hurt."
And God said, "I know."*

*I said, "God, I cry a lot."
And God said, "That is why I gave you tears."*

*I said, "God, I am so depressed."
And God said, "That is why I gave you sunshine."*

*I said, "God, life is so hard."
And God said, "That is why I gave you loved ones"*

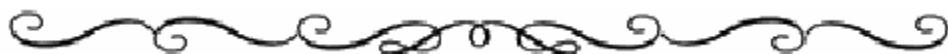
*I said, "God, my loved one died."
And God said, "So did mine."*

*I said, "God, it is such a loss."
And God said, "I saw my son nailed to a cross."*

*I said, "God, but your loved one lives."
And God said, "So does yours."*

*I said, "God, where are they now?"
And God said, "Mine is on My right
and yours' is in the Light."*

*I said, "God it hurts."
And God said, "I know."*





God Said "No"

*I asked God to take away my grief,
And God said "NO."
He said it was not for Him to take
away,
But for me to work through.*

*I asked God to make my broken heart
whole,
And God said "NO."
He said my spirit is whole.
My pain is only temporary.*

*I asked God to take away my pride
And God said "NO."
He said it was not for Him to take
away,
But for me to give up.*

*I asked God to make
My handicapped child whole,
And God said "NO."
He said the body is only temporary.*

*I asked God to grant me patience
And God said "NO."
He said patience is a by-product of
tribulation.
It isn't granted, it's earned.*

*I asked God to give me happiness
And God said "NO."
He said He gives His blessings,
Happiness is up to me.*

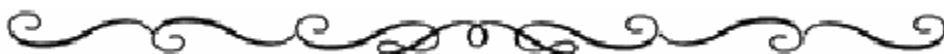
*I asked God to spare me from pain
And God said "NO."
He said sufferings draw you apart
from
Worldly cares and brings you closer
to Him.*

*I asked God to make my spirit grow
And God said "NO."
He said I must grow on my own,
But He will prune me to make me
fruitful.*

*I asked God if He loved me
And God said "YES."
He gave His only Son who died for
me,
And I will be in heaven someday
because I believe.*

*I asked God to help me love others
As much as He loves me
And God said,
"Ah, you finally have the idea!"*

~ Claudia Weisz ~





Do not Stand and Weep

*Do not stand by my grave and weep
I am not there I do not sleep
I am a thousand winds that blow
I am the diamond glints on snow
I am the sunlight on ripened grain
I am the gentle autumn rain*

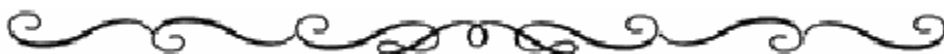
*When you awaken in the morning hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
of quiet birds in circled flight
I am the stars that shine in the night
Do not stand at my grave and cry
I am not there, I did not die*

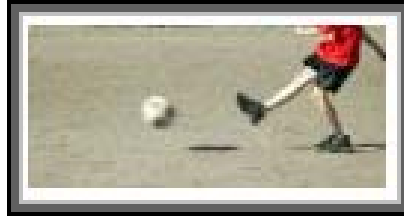
~ Robert Hepburn ~



*If we must be separated here,
At least let us enjoy the reunion of
Eternity*

~ Sr. Elizabeth Seton~

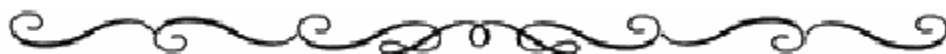




Go Ahead And Mention My Child

*Go ahead and mention my child,
The one that died you know.
Don't worry about hurting me further,
the depth of my pain doesn't show.
Don't worry about making me cry,
I'm already crying inside.
Help me to heal by releasing,
the tears that I try to hide.
I'm hurt when you just keep silent,
pretending he didn't exist.
I'd rather you mention my child,
Knowing that he has been missed.
You asked me how I was doing,
I said "pretty good" or "fine".
But healing is something ongoing,
I feel it will take a lifetime.*

~ Author Unknown ~





The Broken Chain

*We little knew that morning that God
was going to call your name.*

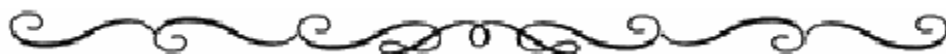
*In life we loved you dearly,
in death we do the same.*

*It broke our hearts to lose you,
you did not go alone;
For part of us went with you,
the day God called you home.*

*You left us peaceful memories;
Your love is still our guide;
And though we can not see you,
you are always at our side.*

*Our family chain is broken,
and nothing seems the same;
But as God calls us one by one,
the chain will link again.*

~ Author Unknown ~





Togetherness

*Death has caused me to slip away from you.
Whatever we were to each other, we still are.*

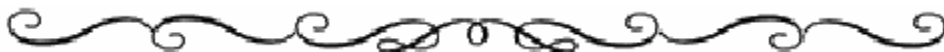
*Call me by my old familiar name.
Speak to me in the same easy way you always have.
Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes we enjoyed.
Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.*

*Life means all that it ever meant.
It is the same as it always was.
There is absolute continuity.*

*Why should I be out of your mind
Because I am out of your sight?
I am but waiting for you, for an interval,
Somewhere very near,
Just around the corner.*

*All is well.
Nothing is past.
Nothing has been lost.
One brief moment and all will be as it was before..
Only better.*

*Infinitely happier.
We will be one,
Together,
Forever.*





To Those I Love and Those Who Love Me

*When I am gone, release me, let me go,
I have so many things to see and do,
You mustn't tie yourself to me with tears.
Be happy that we had so many years.*

*I gave you my love. You can only guess,
How much you gave to me in happiness.
I thank you for the love you each have shown,
But now it is time I travel alone.*

*So grieve a while for if grieve you must,
then let your grief be, comforted by trust.
It's only for awhile that we must part,
so bless the memories within your heart.*

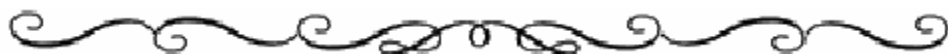
*I won't be far away, for life goes on.
So if you need me, call and I will come.*

*Though you can't see or touch me, I'll be near.
And if you listen with your heart, you'll hear,
All of my love around you, soft and clear.*

*And then, when you must come this way alone,
I'll greet you with a smile, and say,*

"Welcome Home"

~ Author Unknown ~





The AfterLoss Credo

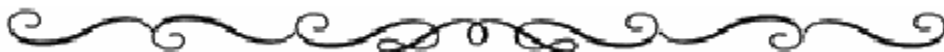
*I need to talk about my loss.
I may often need to tell you what happened -
Or to ask you why it happened.
Each time I discuss my loss, I am helping myself
Face the reality of the death of my loved one.
I need to know that you care about me.
I need to feel your touch, your hugs.
I need you just to be with me.
(And I need to be with you.)
I need to know you believe in me and in my
ability to get through my grief in my own way.
(and in my own time)*

*Please don't judge me now -
Or think that I am behaving strangely.
Remember I'm grieving.
I may even be in shock.
I may feel afraid. I may feel deep rage.
I may even feel guilty. But above all, I hurt.
I'm experiencing pain unlike any I've ever felt
before.*

*Don't worry if you think I'm getting better
And then suddenly I seem to slip backward.
Grief makes me behave this way at times.
And please don't tell me you "know how I feel",
Or that it's time to get on with my life.
(I am probably already telling this to myself.)
What I need now is to grieve and to recover.*

*Most of all, thank you for being my friend.
Thank you for your patience.
Thank you for your caring.
Thank you for helping, and understanding.
Thank you for praying for me.
And remember, in the days ahead or years ahead,
After your loss - when you need me
As I needed you - I will understand.
And then I will come and be with you.*

~ Barbara Hills LesStrang ~

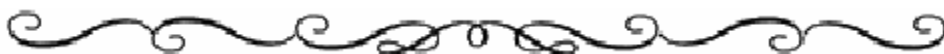




Comfort and Understanding

*We each came in with our tears and pain wrapped tightly together.
Comfort and understanding was what we were seeking.
All of this was so new to us, these feelings of ours ...
We quickly glanced around at the others in the room and wondered,
Do they feel and hurt like I do?
We thought we couldn't tell about our loss... It's too fresh... too new.
So we sat and quietly waited, around the room we went.
We spoke our name and quickly shared whom we were there for.
Slowly, we each became a bit more at ease.
One shared the story of how her spouse died.
She talked about the pain that is felt so strong.
"Will it ever get any easier?" was her cry.
We found ourselves nodding in agreement; we thought, that's how I feel.
Another spoke of family and friends,
"They don't understand." "Don't they get it!" he cried.
Again, we agreed and reached out in comfort,
We soon realized how much we had in common;
Although our losses were ours and ours alone,
We understood each other, we felt their pain,
We identified with what they were saying.
Over the weeks, we've gotten to know each other.
We look forward to going to group and seeing everyone;
We also wonder if everything is okay when one isn't there,
Little did we know that in our grief such friendships would be made.*

~ Kathy Ayling ~





This, Too, Shall Pass

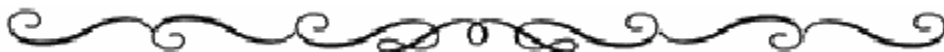
*When some great sorrow, like a mighty river,
Flows through your life with peace-destroying power,
And dearest things are swept from sight forever,
Say to your heart each trying hour:
“This, too, shall pass away.”*

*When ceaseless toil has hushed your song of gladness,
And you have grown almost too tired to pray,
Let this truth banish from your heart its sadness,
And ease the burdens of each trying day:
“This, too, shall pass away.”*

*When fortune smiles, and, full of mirth and pleasure,
The days are flitting by without a care,
Lest you should rest with only earthly treasure,
Let these few words their fullest import bear:
“This, too, shall pass away.”*

*When earnest labor brings you fame and glory,
And all earth’s noblest ones upon you smile,
Remember that life’s longest, grandest story
Fills but a moment in earth’s little while:
“This, too, shall pass away.”*

~ Lanta Wilson Smith ~

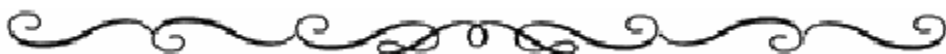




Timeless Treasures

*As we go from child to adulthood
We experience a journey filled with lessons taught.
Some of failure, some of success,
Some of goodness, some of naught'
But all in all as life progresses,
God is with us, through all the messes.
We make our mistakes and own choices
He listens to us when we lift up our voices.
One of life's lessons so hard to endure
Is the loss of a loved one, a love so pure.
"He will guide us through to make amends,
On angels wings "His" love he'll send.
In times of grief we are so sad,
Depressed at times and even mad.
But God promises to stay at our side
To Heaven some day with our eyes opened wide.
The timeless treasures are the memories sought
In God's hand our loved one's caught
He'll love them and keep them in the palms of hands
Until we can meet them in Heaven again.*

~ Teri Winkler ~

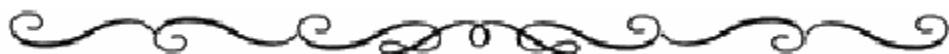




If I Could Talk With You Right Now...

*I would tell you that I love you!
I would ask you not to cry for me
or anguish that we're apart,
I would hold you
and wipe away your tears,
I would tell you how blessed I was
to have had you in my life,
to have known
Your beautiful heart,
And I would take your hand
and whisper softly,
"Don't worry
For I cannot even begin to describe
the joy of being
in the Father's arms,
Our separation is but an instant
in the eternity of love we share!"*

~ Janet Sullivan ~





Around The Corner

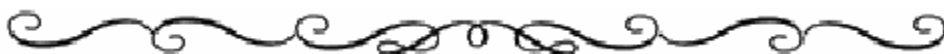
*Around the corner I have a friend in this great city that has no end.
Yet days go by and weeks rush on and before I know it a year has gone.
I never see my old friends face for life is a swift and terrible race.
He knows I like him just as well, as in the days when
I rang his bell and he rang mine...*

*Now we are tired busy men. Tired with trying to make a name.
Tired with trying to play the game. Tomorrow I say I will call on Jim,
just to let him know that I am thinking of him.
But tomorrow comes and tomorrow goes
and the distance between us grows and grows.*

*Around the corner, yet miles away, here's a telegram sir,
Jim died today...
So that's what we get and deserve in the end.*

Around the corner, a vanished friend.

~ Author Unknown ~





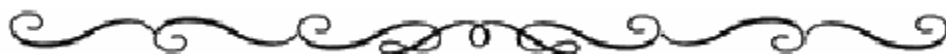
To Those Who Mourn

*Try not to distract the traveller,
who is journeying to the light.
They are returning to the creator,
let them travel with all their might.
Rejoice at their newfound gain,
and not at your selfish loss,
regardless of the circumstances,
they have gone to meet the boss.*

*By weeping for your loved one,
you can make sad the soul,
distract them on their journey,
and interfere with their goal.
When they reach their new destination,
Beyond the comprehension of man,
The sick are released from their illness,
and their burdens are placed in the can.
Their life's purpose has come to an end,
a purpose we can know little of,
if you truly have loved them, release them,
and wish them a good journey's end.*

*I release you now, my loved one,
From all your attachments to me,
I wish you a pleasant journey,
And now I set you free.
I will not interfere with your journey,
nor punish myself, at your loss,
I will treasure you in my memories,
and rejoice, at you, meeting "The Boss".*

~ Author Unknown ~





*What the caterpillar calls
the end of the world,
the master calls the butterfly!*

Butterfly Memorial Poem

*A rush of wings
they flutter high
to touch the sun
and kiss the sky*

*A butterfly
is with us now
No more a caterpillar
upon a leaf*

*(Person's Name)
with angel wings
A soaring butterfly
with us they sing*

~ Lili Pintea-Reed ~

Butterfly Benediction

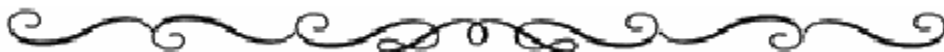
*May the morning sun caress you,
The rains of change refresh you,
And the gentle breeze of His Spirit
Lift the wings of your transformation.*

~ Richard D. Breen ~

A Symbol of Hope

*A Symbol of Hope
A butterfly lights beside us like
a sunbeam
And for a brief moment its
glory and beauty belong to our
world
But then it flies again
And though we wish it could
have stayed...
We feel lucky to have seen it.*

~ Author Unknown ~





I AM NOT THERE

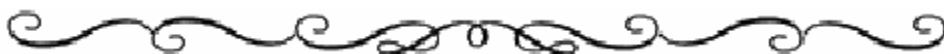
*Do not stand by my grave and weep
For I am not there.*

*I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am diamonds that glint on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.*

*When you awaken in the morning hush
I am the swift uplifting rush of butterflies in joyous flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.*

*Do not stand at my grave and cry.
I am not there.
I did not die.*

~ Author Unknown ~





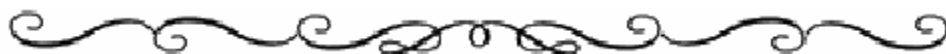
If Tears Could Build A Stairway

*If tears could build a stairway,
And memories were a lane,
I would walk right up to Heaven,
To bring you home again.*

*No Farewell Words Were Spoken,
No Time To Say Goodbye,
You Were Gone Before We Knew it,
And Only God Knows Why.*

*My heart still aches in sadness,
And secret tears will flow,
What is meant to me to lose you,
No one will ever know.*

~ Author Unknown ~





Rose Beyond the Wall

*A rose once grew
where all could see,
sheltered beside
a garden wall,
And as the days passed
swiftly by,
it spread its branches, straight and
tall...*

*One day, a beam of light
shone through
a crevice that had
opened wide ~
The rose bent gently
toward its warmth
then passed beyond
to the other side*

*Now, you who deeply
feel its loss,
be comforted ~ the rose blooms there
~
its beauty even greater now,
nurtured by
God's own loving care.*

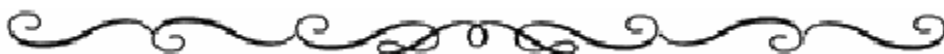
~ A.L. Frink ~

Miss Me, But Let Me Go

*When I come to the end of the road,
and the sun has set for me.
I want no rites in a gloom-filled room.
Why cry for a soul set free?
Miss me a little—but not too long,
and not with your head bowed low.
Remember the love that was once
shared.
Miss me, but let me go.*

*For this is a journey we all must take,
and each must go alone.
It's all a part of the master's plan,
a step on the road to home.
When you are lonely and sick of
heart,
go to the friends we know.
Bear your sorrow in good deeds.
Miss me, but let me go.*

~ Author Unknown ~



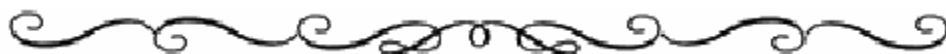


The Lily

*We can't know why the lily has so brief a time to bloom
in the warmth of the sunlight's kiss upon its face,
before it folds its fragrance in and bids
the world goodnight to rest its beauty in a gentler place.*

*But we know that nothing that is loved is ever lost,
and no one who has ever touched a heart can really pass away,
because some beauty lingers on in each memory
of which they've ever been a part.*

~ Ellen Brenneman ~



BRAVING THE HOLIDAYS

holidays

With good reason, holiday seasons are often among the most emotionally difficult of times for people who have experienced the death of a loved one. Holidays are intended to be a time of great joy, family togetherness, gift giving and thankfulness. Yet, if someone in your life has recently died, holidays can invoke extreme sadness, loneliness and emptiness.

Holidays may be difficult no matter what you try to do or where you go. A new approach might open doors to the celebration of the memory of your loved one.

what brings comfort

COMFORT

Set Limits For Yourself

Look to simplify rather than overwhelm yourself. Do only as much as you can manage emotionally and physically.

Express Your Feelings

Sharing the vulnerabilities of your emotions with others who are grieving your loss, brings strength to all.

Ask For What You Need

Unless you tell them, other people cannot know what you need or are feeling. Ask for help with shopping, entertaining, cooking and cleaning.

Resist Isolation

The love and the enjoyment of being with those who love you can nourish and aid you in healing.

Avoid The Holiday

Choosing not to celebrate is an option. However, you may find it feels better to at least acknowledge your loss and your loved one in some special and meaningful way.

Break From Tradition

Traditions which emphasize the absence of your loved one may not be appropriate this year. If you do keep with certain traditions, allow for minor changes, such as where you spend the holiday or with whom.

New Traditions

Creating new rituals may be more healing for you and the rest of the family than rekindling past activities. Involving friends and family may help heal their grief as well.



The holidays can be a time for opening the gifts of special memories. We offer the following celebration as our gift to you and your family. Gather family and friends to share in this loving tribute. Select five people, each to read one passage.

As we light these four candles in honor of you, we light one for our grief, one for our courage, one for our memories and one for our love.

LIGHT FIRST CANDLE

"The light of this first candle represents our grief. The pain of losing you is intense. It reminds us of the depth of our love for you."

LIGHT SECOND CANDLE

"The light of this second candle represents our courage to comfort each other; to change our lives."

LIGHT THIRD CANDLE

"This third candle is a light in all of our memories of you. To the times we laughed, the times we cried, the times we were angry with each other, the silly things you did, the caring and joy you gave us."

LIGHT FOURTH CANDLE

"This fourth candle is the light of our love. As we enter this holiday season, day by day, we cherish the special place in our hearts that will always be reserved for you. We thank you for the gift your life brought to each of us. We love you always."

By Nancy Meoller, LSW, CADC



MY FIRST CHRISTMAS IN HEAVEN

*I see the countless Christmas trees
around the world below
With tiny lights like Heaven's stars,
reflecting on the snow.*

*The sight is so spectacular,
please wipe away the tear
For I am spending Christmas with
Jesus Christ this year.*

*I hear the many Christmas songs
that people hold so dear
But the sounds of music can't
compare
with the Christmas choir up here.*

*I have no words to tell you,
the joy their voices bring,
For it is beyond description,
to hear the angels sing.*

*I know how much you miss me,
I see the pain inside your heart.
But I am not so far away,
We really aren't apart.*

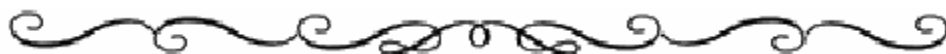
*So be happy for me, dear ones,
You know I hold you dear.
And be glad I'm spending Christmas
with Jesus Christ this year.*

*I sent you each a special gift,
from my heavenly home above,
I sent you each a memory
of my undying love.*

*After all love is a gift more precious
than pure gold.
It was always most important
in the stories Jesus told.*

*Please love and keep each other,
as my Father said to do.
For I can't count the blessing or love
he has for each of you.*

*So have a Merry Christmas and
wipe away that tear.
Remember, I am spending Christmas
with
Jesus Christ this year.*





"Footprints in the Sand"

*One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord.
Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky.
In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand.
Sometimes there were two sets of footprints,
other times there were one set of footprints.*

*This bothered me because I noticed
that during the low periods of my life,
when I was suffering from
anguish, sorrow or defeat,
I could see only one set of footprints.*

*So I said to the Lord,
"You promised me Lord,
that if I followed you,
you would walk with me always.
But I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life
there have only been one set of footprints in the sand.
Why, when I needed you most, you have not been there for me?"*

*The Lord replied,
"The times when you have seen only one set of footprints in the sand,
is when I carried you."*

~ Mary Stevenson ~



We Remember Them

*At the rising of the sun,
And at its going down,
We remember them,*

*At the blowing of wind
And the chill of winter,
We remember them.*

*At the opening of the buds
And in the rebirth of spring,
We remember them.*

*At the blueness of the skies
And in the warmth of summer,
We remember them.*

*At the rustling of leaves
And in the beauty of autumn,
We remember them.*

*At the beginning of the year
And when it ends,
We remember them.*

*As long as we live, they too will live,
For they are now a part of us
As we remember them.*

*We we are weary
And in need of strength,
We remember them.*

*We we are weary
And in need of strength,
We remember them.*

*We we are lost
And sick of heart,
We remember them.*

*When we have joy
That we crave to share,
We remember them.*

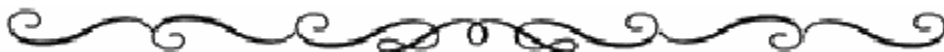
*When we have decisions
That are difficult to make,
We remember them.*

*We we have achievements
That are based on theirs,
We remember them.*

*As long as we live, they too will live,
For they are now a part of us
As we remember them.*



~ Source Unknown ~





*St. James/St. Thomas
Grief Support Group*