

(continued from yesterday)

## Walking in Darkness, Part 2

by Darryl Walker

The last time Michael was able to attend church in a wheelchair, he interrupted the service after the sermon and said that he had something to say. He told the pastor and congregation, especially the caregivers, how much he loved and appreciated them.

A few weeks later, Michael died quietly. He was surrounded by Rev. Glenna Shepherd, her partner, my brother, my niece and me. I had called an ambulance, but when the paramedics arrived, the application of electrical shock would not revive his heart. The paramedics had been called to our house before and they extended sincere condolences to me.



Today, we are experiencing another period of darkness for many as the world copes with the Covid-19 virus. A few in MCCDC have contracted Covid-19 and one required hospitalization. Others are having feelings of fear, depression, anxiety and loneliness because they cannot interact with their family and friends in person. Their lives can be further complicated if there is no longer a reliable source of income.

I consider myself fortunate to have relatives, members of MCCDC, volunteers of Mary's House and members of a couple of social organizations to which I belong that reach out to me regularly by phone and email.

When a relative or church friend reaches out to you, sharing their period of fear and anxiety, the first words that you say to them are particularly important. Saying "I am so sorry" does little to comfort and misses the opportunity to acknowledge their life altering situation and extend your hand to them as a disciple of Christ.

You have only one opportunity to choose a light-filled response that comforts and is appropriate for the darkness that they are experiencing. I learned many years ago that such a time requires a brief prayer asking God for the words to use in reply. You have only a few seconds, so the simple prayer "God, what should I say?" is sufficient. This approach to prayer is eloquently developed in the book *Conversing with God* by Rosalind Rinker.

When meditating on ways I can minister to others, I find guidance in the prayer attributed to St. Francis of Assisi:

*Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.  
Where there is injury, pardon.  
Where there is doubt, faith.  
Where there is despair, hope.*

***Where there is darkness, light.***

*Where there is sadness, joy.*

*Amen.*