



BETHANY BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

Hope For The Highway - The Biker's Bible

A story of Loss and Hope

My Name is Tony Malone. I am 51 years of age. I grew up in Crumlin with my parents and seven older sisters.

I was always interested in sports, karate and kickboxing in particular and in 1983, I reached black belt grades in both of these disciplines.

Around this time I became an instructor and opened my first club in Crumlin

It was here that I met my future wife, Sandra, who also achieved the rank of black belt and became a teacher.

We moved to England where we lived and worked for a couple of years.

Finally, we became homesick and decided to come home. We both worked hard and bought a house in Clondalkin and in time we were blessed with the arrival of three amazing little boys Shane, Carl, and Alex. The boys made our lives complete and we loved them with all our hearts.

Around 1995 we moved our family to the Knocklyon parish.

We all loved this area and settled in to family life here straight away. The kids settled very well in school and made great friends around the area. After a while we opened a kickboxing club in St.Colmcilles school, where we all had a great time teaching both kids and adults. We are now in our 10th year running this club and it's still going strong.

We always had a great family life. Of course we had our share of ups and downs along the way. We were all very close, we talked, joked, argued, cried, and empathised with each other and we always supported each other through thick and thin.

We were also always a very active family and we did everything together, fishing, swimming etc. We were all very different people but we understood each other and loved one another.

In Short, We were Blessed, Life was Great. Not that we appreciated this at the time.

Friday 13th November 2009.

Our Whole World Was Shattered In One Second.

Our Beloved, Happy Go Lucky, Carefree, Healthy, Loving, Caring Son Carl, Died. (Adult Sudden Death Syndrome).

We were all lost, dazed, , shocked, heartbroken, emptied out completely.

We all felt hopeless, helpless, disorientated, this could not be real. How? Why?

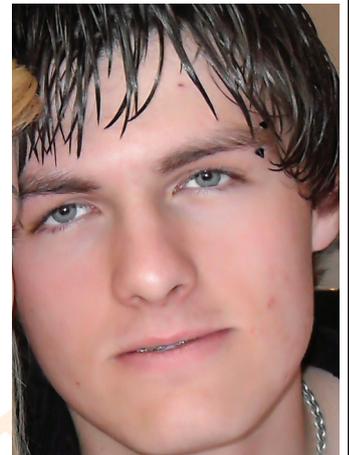
At this time Carl was 16, Shane 19, and poor Alex was only 6. Carl's girlfriend Shauna was with us when he died, she was great and tried to save him with CPR. She was only 17 years old herself at the time. Shauna was the love of Carl's life. She made him unbelievably happy and she will always be a very special part of our family. They loved each other completely. He died peacefully in her loving arms.

A part of every one of us died with Carl that night, and that date 13/11/09 is now etched into our minds, our hearts and our souls forever.

Immediately after Carl's death we were overwhelmed by the love, compassion, understanding and support that were shown to us. Shauna's family, our own very special friends, neighbours, Carl and Shane's school friends and teachers and most of our own family rallied around and shared our grief.

Previously, I had always felt that we were such a strong family, like five fingers of one hand, together we could take on the world and that nobody could break us, but I could not comprehend this situation at all. Now I was lost. I hated the whole world.

I became withdrawn, depressed, empty and suicidal. I lost interest



Tony's son Carl Malone, 16.

in life, I lost my ability to communicate, I blamed myself for everything that went wrong in my past and I felt heartbroken, ashamed and guilty for every harsh word that I had ever spoken to Carl or indeed to any of my family. I was a completely broken man.

I have been a biker on and off for most of my life. Two weeks before Carl died, with my family's encouragement, I bought myself a Harley, even though I couldn't really afford it as my job was dodgy at that time. I remember clearly Carl saying: "You have to buy this bike, if you don't buy this, you will never do it again, you have to go for it now".

For the next year after Carl died, this motorbike kept me alive and sane. I used the bike to escape from the world and spent a lot of time riding over the mountains and up and the down motorways, always thinking, always wondering, and always seeking answers to the same questions, Why did Carl have to go? Where is he? Is he ok? Is he safe? Nobody could answer these questions for me and my mind turned

"The Bethany Journey"



At the book Launch of "The Bethany Journey" on 20th October 2012 Moira Staines (Chairperson) presents Mary Brady (author) with a bouquet of flowers in recognition of her wonderful publication.

continued on page 2

Children grieve differently to Adults

*Keynote talk at 2013 Bethany AGM
by Mary Lynch of Barnardo's*

Children grieve differently to adults and their reaction to grief varies with the age of the child. They need clear and accurate information and the words dead and dying should be used and explained if necessary. Understanding can be easier if it can be related to the death of a pet. Children fully understand death when they realise that it is universal, inevitable, irreversible and permanent.

Children can have very varied reactions, Mary explained, they may scream or go silent or simply want to continue playing, they cling to the surviving parent or worry about the health of family members and friends. They need time

to process the information but should not be told when alone.

0-2 years. This age group have no understanding of death but may have feelings of separation due to the absence of their usual carer. They need a routine of feeding and nurturing i.e. being held and cuddled.

3-5 years. This group will be very aware and may search for the dead person or think they are in some way responsible for the death. They may regress to a stage prior to the death when they felt safe by thumb sucking, tantrums or bed wetting. They need a regular routine and at school the teacher can help. True but age suited information should be given and repeated to

ensure the child understands. They may show their grief through play or art.

6-8 years. This group have a wider social network and more understanding of death, they may become obsessed with it and avoid speaking of their feelings so as not to hurt the surviving adult. They need an honest explanation and may be encouraged to attend the funeral but an adult should be assigned to care for them, an aunt

or grandparent. **But it must be their decision.**

9-12 years. This group may realise that if everyone dies, death can include them, that death is final, adults must try to get them to talk about their feelings and their memories and help to express their grief. These feelings may cause bad behaviour to recur. They need the support of friends and family and also their teacher.

Please continue to support Bethany by buying our books and CDs. The Bethany journey €5, Time without you €5 and The Grieving Journey CD €3.

Please send in your parish report if it has not already been sent.

Groups should sponsor suitable (after 18 months) bereaved people on the Orlagh bereavement weekend.

Hope For The Highway - The Biker's Bible

....continued from page 1
to God.

I supposed I had always believed in God but never put much thought in it before.

Around this time a neighbour knocked in a few times to see if I was doing ok, and although I wasn't very receptive, he continued to show concern and compassion. On one occasion, having realised that I was a biker, he mentioned me and my situation to a fellow biker he had met in his church. This biker then handed him a book called "Hope for the Highway - The Bikers Bible" which he felt I should have. My neighbour passed this book onto me as requested, and this book has now had a very profound and significant effect on my life. Prior to this, I often drank in order to escape from myself, and to numb the pains of my life.

This book has now given me the strength, the hope, the faith, the reassurance and the answers that I need, in order to keep going forward and cope again with life and life's many twisting and winding roads as I

travel my life's path to my own final destination

I began by reading the personal testimonies of people whose lives were touched by God. I found these stories very moving and then later on I had the unexpected privilege of meeting two of the people who had given their testimonies, Roger and Rayleen Wilson. Meeting these people and getting to know them personally, really brought their stories to life for me and helped me to understand the reality, the honesty and the bravery that it took for them to lay their lives on the line for all to see. Their story also showed the power of god and the Holy Spirit, and demonstrated to me how the lord had transformed their lives and helped them to overcome their own demons and learn to live and love again after going through some truly harrowing experience.

I checked out the Christian Motorcycle Association Logo on the back cover and made contact with their members. I joined this group on regular motorbike ride outs and got to know them well as really nice people and great

caring friends, before embarking on their Growing in Grace Course.

As I mentioned earlier, I already knew the basics and bible stories from school, home, mass etc, but now I understood much better how to try to apply the teachings of Christ to my life. When the Growing In Grace course was completed, we then set aside one night per week for group bible study. It was through these study and discussion sessions that I learnt how to read the bible properly with meaning and understanding.

Here are some quotes, sayings and passages that I find particularly meaningful and helpful in my daily life:

"God is near. Carl is with God. Carl is near. Carl is safe. We will see Carl again"

"The task ahead of you is never as great as the power within you Through my bible study and my strong faith in God, I believe that I now have the strength and the tools to overcome life's adversities. I know that as a person I will fall down from time to time, but with God's help I will get back up and go on.

As my son Shane, who is a fight-

er, says:

"You don't lose if you get knocked down; you lose if you don't get back up".

Although I will be heartbroken forever over the death of my beloved son Carl, I know that wherever I travel to from now on, no matter what roads I travel on, I will never be alone again. Now two others always ride with me on my motorbike, Carl and Jesus.

Even though Carl is now passed on, he is still very much with us, in our thoughts and in our hearts forever, but safe now in God's hands. We will see him again in heaven. Knowing this, I can still say, "there are five in our family, like five fingers of one hand, we love each other and we always will. In both this life and in the next one".

As God calls us home, one by one, in our own time, our family chain will join again.

For Sandra, Shane, Carl, Alex. I Love You All. Thanks for everything.

*Tony Malone
- In God We Trust.*

The 19th Bethany A.G.M. 16th February 2013

Delegates arrived from all parts of the country for the AGM and registration began at 9.30. Moira welcomed everyone and Mass was celebrated by Fr. Myles. A moving service of light took place during the mass to commemorate the members and relatives of members who died during the year.

The meeting was convened by the Secretary, Deirdre Ó Muirí, who then read the minutes, the acceptance of which was proposed by Winnie and seconded by Moira.

Treasurer's report:

Anne Butler, who succeeded Ronan as treasurer read the financial report. Due to the ongoing cuts in spending the grant to Bethany is reduced by 12% each year and the annual €50 donation is still needed. She also noted that grants would not be given to new groups in 2013; however any group already in receipt of a grant in any past year should apply for it before 28th Feb.

Secretary's report:

11 monthly meetings were held to co-ordinate the activities of Bethany during the year. There were some changes to the board. Winnie Keogh retired as chairperson and was replaced by Moira Staines. Moira's post as secretary was temporarily filled by Deirdre Ó Muirí. Ronan Hughes stepped down as treasurer and

Anne Butler now fills that post. Finally Liz Ronaldson joined the board having been nominated at last years AGM Training courses were held in Clonliffe, Esker, Belfast, Monkstown, Cherith and, for the first time for Munster, in Mallow.

The Orlagh bereavement weekend was very successful with 25 attending. The next one will be held from Nov 22nd to 24th of November 2013.

The stand at the Eucharistic Congress was well visited and grateful thanks go to the volunteers who manned it and Liz who organized them.

Further training for members has begun and will continue throughout the year organised by Gobnait.

20th October was a busy and productive day as the new 5 session bereavement course was introduced to the members. The history of Bethany "The Bethany Journey" was revised by Mary Brady and launched in the afternoon. Mass was celebrated by Bishop Eamon Walsh and Fr. Myles. A presentation was made to Fr. Myles in recognition of 30 years of ministry to Bethany.

Chairperson's report:

Moira welcomed new groups from Mt. Argus, Mallow, Charleville and Finglas Suicide support group.

She thanked GEC members and the trainers for all their

hard work during year. Thanks also to Jim Garland and Brendan Nugent as they step down from the board.

Moira's priorities for the coming year are; 1) Development of skills in reaching out to the bereaved.; 2) Implementation of the 5 module program for group meetings; 3) Development of clusters; 4) Support from established parish groups for the new groups in their area.

5) Funding; we may have to look to fundraising as FSA grants continue to be cut.

Day of reflection will be given by Fr. Jim Cogley on Sat 27th April in Clonliffe.

The Guest speaker was Mary Lynch of Barnardo's who spoke about the reactions of children

of different ages to grief. A report on this talk is given on the facing page.

After a question and answer session 3 brief regional reports were given by

1) Sr. Mary Glennon who spoke of the on going weekend training in Esker,

2) Clair Dowds, who spoke about training and expansion in the North.

3) Maureen Roddy who has been running a 5 week healing course in Kingscourt for many years similar to the new 5 part course being introduced at the moment.

Lunch at 2pm ended the proceedings on a sociable note as delegates chatted to each other and exchanged notes.



Bishop Eamonn Walsh presents an icon of Our Lady to Fr. Myles O'Reilly in recognition of his 30 years of ministry to Bethany.

Day of Reflection for Bethany members *Loss and Recovery*

*'While the heart grieves for that which it has lost,
The Spirit dances for that which it has found.'*

by

Fr Jim Cogley

Venue: Clonliffe College, Drumcondra, Dublin 9

Date: Saturday 27th April 2013

Time: 9:30am - 4:00pm

Cost: €20 per person

(light lunch to be provided Tea/coffee sandwiches)

RSVP : Name of Parish Group

Number attending

Please respond by 19th April 2013

to: mastaines@hotmail.com

or Text to mobile: 087 2345432

General Executive Committee 2013

Fr. Myles O' Reilly - **Spiritual Director**

Moira Staines - **Chairperson**

Phil Crowley - **Secretary**

Anne Butler - **Treasurer**

Winnie Keogh, Deirdre O Muirí, Gobnait O Grady,

Maeve Mason, Liz Ronaldson.

Bethany Bereavement Support Group contact details:

Bethany Bereavement Support Group,
c/o Rathfarnham Parish Centre, Willbrook Road,
Rathfarnham, Dublin 14.

Bethany Phone: 087 9905299

Email: bethanysupport@eircom.net

Website: www.bethany.ie

My Orlagh Bereavement Weekend

My name is Olivia Murphy. My beloved husband Gerry passed away on the 2nd July, 2011. The shock as well as the sense of loss and pain was overwhelming.

I am blessed with wonderful family support, for which I thank God. However, 18 months later, the feelings of loss and loneliness are still immense.

A friend offered me an opportunity to join the Bethany support group for a weekend in Orlagh House. "Exploring death and loss of our loved one's" was the theme for the weekend.

I nervously accepted the invitation on 23rd November 2012 I apprehensively packed my weekend case and journeyed towards Orlagh House. I arrived at 7pm. It was a dark November night but the lights from this beautiful majestic house filled me with awe and wonder.

Upon entering the house, memories of my boarding school days came flooding back, but they quickly vanished when a warm welcome by the Bethany team was extended to me. Hot tea and chocolate biscuits were generously offered. Gradually my fellow "pilgrims" arrived. We exchanged greetings, knowing each of us were on a journey into the unknown.

As we sat around in a large circle, listening to Fr Myles outline the program for the Bethany journey, the sense of sorrow and sadness in the room was palpable. Each of us was carrying a burden of loss and grief.

Fr Myles encouraged us to be open and truthful when telling our bereavement story and to listen gently to others. Through mediation we were guided back to our childhood days by our facilitator, Nuala and so our grief and loss began to unfold. We recalled memories of our past, happy

times, sad times, times of trials and difficulties, and now, sorrow, loss and loneliness.

Grieving is something few of us will escape, it is part of love and it really hurts. We must remember the line "Lord you are close to the broken hearted".

The following morning after a lovely breakfast we enjoyed a panoramic view from this stately house, taking in Dublin city and Dublin bay. Then we returned to the main room and formed into small sharing groups, facilitated by a Bethany member. As we listened to each one tell their story of bereavement, negative emotions like hurt, fear, anger, guilt, resentment and anxiety began to emerge. These emotions were blocking our grieving process. We offered support comfort and understanding to each other.

The day was brought to a close with a ritual. We were invited to write a letter to God, to open our hearts, to express our imperfections, our fears and anxieties and any unfinished business we might have. This exercise freed us and allowed joy once again enter our lives. The letters were sealed and discarded, and were replaced by a lighted candle, symbolising new life coming into us. Reconciliation was now complete. This ceremony was followed by mass in memory of our loved ones.

A sense of surprise then entered the evening. As the father gave a party for the return of his prodigal son, so too did our own Fr. Myles and the Bethany team give us a wonderful party, celebrating our own coming home to ourselves. We enjoyed a glass of wine chatted laughed shared jokes and songs together.

The next morning was spent viewing an informative DVD on the after life. We discussed the after life and how it impacts on our own life. Finally each of us expressed how the weekend had helped us.

We entered Orlagh broken in spirit and we were now leav-



Orlagh House, Retreat Centre, Dublin 16.

ing with renewal and healing. On observation each "pilgrim" appeared happier more relaxed and released from negative emotion. While we still have sorrow at the loss of our loved one, we are now able to grieve in a positive way, knowing our loved ones are at peace, thus allowing us also to find peace. We need to hold on to the certainty that we have a soul that lives forever and some day we will be united in heaven.

The Bethany weekend gave us hope, joy and courage to face the future knowing that God loves us unconditionally and God is always with us. Personally it was the The Serenity

Prayer that spoke most to me. *"God grant me the serenity to accept what I cannot change, Courage to change what I can And wisdom to know the difference."*

By now friendships were formed phone numbers were exchanged and an atmosphere of joy and humour was dominant.

We hugged and waved good bye to Fr Myles and his wonderfully skilled Bethany Team, knowing we would still have sad days but also knowing we were beginning our healing journey with courage and hope.

Dates for your Diary

REFRESHER TRAINING WORKSHOP

(for all trained Bethany volunteers)

A one-day Refresher Training Workshop, including facilitation skills, will take place at:

Clonliffe College on Saturday 18th May

Monkstown Parish Centre on Saturday 8th June.

Cost: €20 **Time:** 10.00am – 4.00pm.

Booking: Liz at 087 2392465 or ronaldson6@eircom.net

TRAINING COURSES IN THE AUTUMN

A 10 week training course will be held in Monkstown Parish Centre.

Starting: Thursday 19th September – Thursday 5th December.

Interviews: Thursday 12th September at 6.00pm – 7.30pm and Saturday 14th September at 10.30am – 11.30am

Application Forms: Liz at 087 239 2465

or ronaldson6@eircom.net

Cost: €150

An Autumn Training Course will be held over two weekends at Esker; (dates to be confirmed)

BEREAVEMENT WEEKEND AT ORLAGH

This year's Orlagh weekend will take place from Friday 23rd to Sunday 25th of November. For further information or an application contact Anne Butler at 087 2050514.