

Sharing Our Story

Sharing their story gives people a sense of completion and peace in their final days. To tell the story of one's life a person must first give some shape to that life. For one person that might mean coming to see in life a beginning, middle and end. For another, a particular image may enable them to express the essence of the life they have lived. Whatever way it is done, once the telling has been accomplished the person seems to be able to let go and to die.

Those who work with persons who are dying tell us that in the time leading up to death many people also feel the need to pass on the things they love to the people they love. Leaving something meaningful with others is a way of saying "Remember me!"

During the time that I was writing this book my mother was living with terminal cancer. One

Saturday morning I spent several hours with her cleaning out a closet in which had accumulated books, photos and other articles that she had collected over a lifetime. Not having the energy to help, she lay on her bed as I withdrew one item at a time and placed it beside her. In deciding what to do with each piece she would sometimes pause to tell me where the object came from, why she had kept it, and what it had meant to her. In letting go and passing on these things that were important to her she shared with me key moments in the story of her life.

On the night before he died Jesus passed on to his friends those things that were most important to him. In breaking bread and sharing a cup of wine he left with them the essence of who he was. It was his way of saying "This is what my life has been about. When you do this, remember me."



An excerpt from
Facing Death, Discovering Life
by James W. Roche
Catholic Health Association of Canada

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