

HOLIDAYS THAT HURT

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I used to think that Father's Day was a nonsense day of celebration. I also thought Thanksgiving, Mother's day, and birthdays were all a waste of time. Surely, there had to be a greeting card salesperson involved in the creation of these trivial holidays.

But, one day I changed my mind. It was the year of 1985, and Father's Day was on its usual Sunday in June. I went to pick up the phone to call Dad. The problem was, Dad was not available.

You see, my Dad had died a year before. That day was my first Father's Day without a father. After thirty years, I had no Dad to send a "silly" card to. I had no one to answer my telephone call. No man would be receiving the gift that I complained about having to purchase and send in the middle of a busy week.

That Sunday, I realized that Father's Day was not just another holiday. Suddenly, it became very important to me. That morning, I remembered my last Father's Day with Dad. I had ordered a plant for him from the florist. When I called, he was thankful for the gift.

However, after he died, I saw the plant in his apartment and became angry, because the plant was very small and plain looking. I wanted to call and yell at the flower shop and say, "Don't you know that that was my Dad's last Father's Day with me? How could you send something so simple as this?"

So since then, through the years, Father's Day has become both important and painful for me. And the other holidays as well.

When Thanksgiving and Christmas arrived, I began to notice that I wasn't the only one hurting on a day which celebration was expected.

There was Mrs. Nelson, whose husband died on Thanksgiving Day last year. Then the family in town, who lost three children in a fire on Christmas, and the young boy who died from a July Fourth fire cracker accident.

I think of Lorriane who dreads Mother's Day because she cannot have children of her own, and also Tom on Veteran's Day, whose father was killed during the Vietnam war.

All these and many more also have to endure those days we mark so casually on our calendars. They are painful reminders, but they are also good reminders for us.

We need to be reminded that life does not stop for celebrations. Everyday someone dies who is loved. Death and pain do not take vacations.

So this holiday season, remember to pray and reach out to those who the holiday season brings much suffering. Be cautious in your words, and be the light of Christ in the lives of those hurting.

Finally, go out and buy that "silly" greeting card and tell that special someone that you love him.

