

## **Dementia Prayer Week 12-19 March: 18<sup>th</sup> March**

The Dementia family Prayer Card payer and the following reflection focus on organisations family and friends Caring for 'and relatives during a time of critical illness.

It can also be a link with Schools who combine the week with the school mass.

### **Spiritual Reflection**

... and they recognised Him at the Breaking of Bread (Luke 24:35)

Some years ago, one of our tenants in Hampton Wick transferred into a local EMI unit. I used to visit Donald regularly and I would celebrate the Eucharistic or bring Holy Communion. Donald suffered from dementia but whenever he saw me, he knew I am a clergyman, and he paid great reverence. That same reverence he showed to the Consecrated Host – Donald recognised Jesus at the breaking of bread. His face would light up. He would join hands in prayer and then reverently receive The Lord and remain in silent prayer. Donald never remembered my name, but he knew I was a priest. He would quickly forget that he had just received the Eucharist, but what of it ...? Donald was present to the Lord as much as The Lord to him.

John was another tenant in Hampton Wick. He was suddenly hospitalised, and I gave him the sacraments, but John was not satisfied – “why can’t I have Mass?” he said.

The next day, after lunch, I was called urgently to John’s hospital bedside for the second time. Before I put the telephone down, I asked if I could celebrate Mass for John in the hospital? The answer was yes, so I got my things together, rushed to the hospital and hurried through the Mass. I told John not to try to respond. By 14.20 I had finished Mass in the private room with the curtains drawn for privacy. John had received the Precious Blood in drops on his tongue. John was fading but was still alive.

At three o’clock I remembered something John had said the day before – it was of his devotion to Divine Mercy, and John passed away on the dot of 15.00! We recognise Jesus at the breaking of bread, but we also recognise Jesus in the dying person.

I remember Brigid who left Hampton Wick to live in a convent at Cross in Hand. She left that when she was unable to get to the chapel by herself, she would have Mass in-house.

Ten days before her 100th birthday Brigid returned to Hampton Wick. She was resident in Orione House where she died on a day or two before her 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday (that she had celebrated a week in advance!) I received a telephone call to say Brigid was dying. I rushed to her, asked the paramedics if I could celebrate Mass at her bedside before they took her to hospital, and, with their permission proceeded to do so. Brigid’s faith had always been strong – she too received the Precious Blood dipped on her tongue. Brigid was ready to go to The Lord. Reluctantly we had to let Brigid go. Everyone knew the journey to the hospital was in vain – but the paramedics’ legal duty was to bring her to hospital. Brigid died before reaching hospital, but she had had her wish and gone peacefully on her way ...

by Fr. Stephen Beale FDP

[www.pastoralcareproject.org.uk/annual-reports-2017-18](http://www.pastoralcareproject.org.uk/annual-reports-2017-18)

Do this in Memory of Me Prayer in official resource pack via link

<https://www.pastoralcareproject.org.uk/dementia-prayer-week>

Do this in Memory of Me Reflection next page...

# Do This in Memory of Me

Loving Father in Heaven,  
You sent your Son, Jesus, to change the world,  
to bring peace to people of good will.  
As he gave himself to us,  
He said, 'DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME'.  
So, when we gather in his name,  
we remember Jesus and his words,  
and he becomes real for us.

Father, we pray for those who need to be reminded  
for as they grow frail their memory may fail them,  
and who may struggle to find the right words,  
but whose life is made up of many stories.

When the memory fades,  
we know that it is not today that is remembered,  
but days of long ago. When we hear your words  
'DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME' we are reminded  
that nothing can separate us from your love.

So, let us cherish today, heavenly Father and all  
the memories we are making,  
memories that are written in the book of life,  
stored forever in grateful hearts.

Life is a gift from you. Memory is your gift, too.  
Let us accept your gifts with joy, and always remember  
that you are the beginning and end of our story.  
We make every prayer to you, Author of all that is good  
in the name of Jesus, our companion on the journey,  
and with the Holy Spirit, our inspiration and our life. Amen.

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by Monsignor Timothy Menzes and the Pastoral Care Project Team



Charity No. 1094766