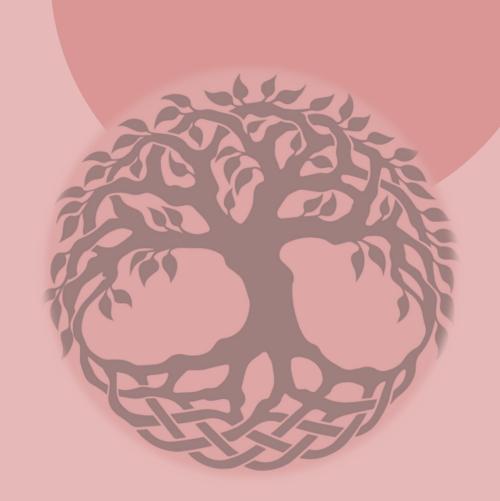
Remaining in lament and hope

A pastoral response for a Voluntary Assisted Dying pathway



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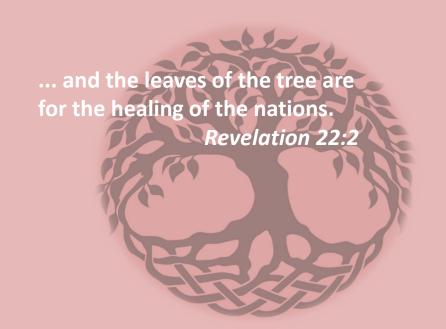
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The seven Words that will be our companions are;

Grace, Mercy, Community, Abandonment, Love, Legacy and Reconcile. together they offer a completeness of the divine/human history.

You may be familiar with them as:

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"

Grace: The companion for Grace is forgive, which is healing presence

"Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Mercy: Always mercy before confession

"Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother."

Community: ... is born and rises from the rawness of shared life together

"My God, my God, why did you abandon me?"

Abandonment: ... in the howl of lament is the turning toward hope

"I am thirsty."

Love: Jesus emptied himself of all but love ...

"It is finished."

Legacy: This is my bequest to you, love one another as I have loved you

"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

Reconcile: Faith into death

Each section offers a pattern through the words;

invitation to companion

introduction to the word theme

sacred reading

Reflection

practice

prayers

Grace

The companion for Grace is forgive, which is healing presence

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

John 1:14

We have intentionally chosen "companioning" to describe a way of being with.

Companioning suggests movement, commitment, trust, together.

The shape of the resource is intentionally liturgical and contemplative and in this way invites and offers opportunities to engage with, and remain pastorally attentive, in what may be a challenging, even disquieting choice being made by people facing what is for them intolerable and terminal illness.

the focus of this resource is about the companioning, not the decision.

The decision belongs to the person whose journey we may companion.

A legal, voluntary safe medically assisted way of dying is no longer speculative or theoretical. It is now a legislated reality.

For some, this is welcome and long waited for; for others, it is not supported - indeed it is opposed.

A prayer

May (your) God sustain you in your dying embrace you in reconciling grace receive you in the abundance of mercy.

May the thoughts of your mind the instincts of your body and the longings of your spirit be embraced in peace

May (your) God accompany you in the time of your parting and comfort your loved ones as you leave.

Amen.

Epilogue

"Take my hand and lead me to salvation
Take my love, for love is everlasting
And remember the truth that once was spoken:
To love another person is to see the face of God."

Victor Hugo
"Les Miserable"