



BEREAVEMENT TRAINING SESSION

For new bereavement facilitators

December 15th, 2018

From 10am to 2pm

St. Catherine of Genoa RCC

520 Linden Blvd. corner of Albany Ave., Brooklyn

**Free parking is available. Lunch will be served.
THE EVENT IS FREE OF CHARGE.**

**To reserve your seat contact
Deacon Mauclair Simon by December 5th
at 718-722-6214 or via email
at Mauclair.Simon@ccbq.org**



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Navigating Daily Life After The Death of a Spouse

▲ by Carol Zimmermann

WASHINGTON (CNS) – Coping with the death of a spouse is a new journey, or pilgrimage, for many and Bill Dodds, a longtime Catholic News Service columnist, knows all about the bumps and detours along the way.

For years, he wrote columns, and books on family life, with his wife, Monica, who died in 2013. After her death he began sharing with readers about a new family experience: being a widower after a marriage of 38 years.

Initially, he said he didn't want to write about his grief because he knew too little about it. It was still uncharted territory.

As he put it just months after her death: "In some ways it seems like years since my wife, Monica, died in January. In other ways, it's only yesterday. And that timeline can shift at any moment, with no apparent regularity or rhythm."

He described navigating those first months without his spouse as "making my way through unfamiliar – sometimes foreign – surroundings. Now I write the checks for the monthly bills. Now, in the evening, the house is very quiet."

Dodds wrote that he had been helped by others whom he described as "new pilgrims like me. Others are guides who have been on this path for a long time and remember their first few weeks, months, years. All of us have a similar story to tell but each story is unique."

In those initial months, he needed help of family and friends and "the grace of God through the sacraments and through his presence in others."

But each day, he said, he took small

steps, and admitted the steps often led to a "winding, circling, confusing path."

Even before his wife died, when she was in the final stage of uterine cancer, Dodds said people were asking if he planned to write a book about widowhood and grief. At first, he dismissed this idea but eventually he decided to write a book on this subject. He intended the book to provide a glimpse to what those early days, months and years of grief can be like.

He expressed these ideas through a fictional novel called "Mildred Nudge: A Widower's Tale," published on the second anniversary of Monica's death.

Dodds said he was gratified to hear people tell him the book gave them a deeper appreciation of what a parent or grandparent, friend or family member was going through or that it gave them newfound sympathy and understanding.

He also said it gave him a window into understanding how little he knows about some hardships people suffer such as the death of a child, divorce, job loss, drug addiction, chronic illness or pain.

"I want to stay 'blissfully ignorant,' but I also want to be better at sympathizing and offering support," he wrote in a CNS column.

That insight, he said, ties in directly to a recurring theme for Pope Francis – urging Christians to walk alongside one another.

He said the pope is pleading with people to: "Look around, become more aware of others who are hurting. Find ways to walk with them and talk with them. Simply, and not so simply, be with them in times of sorrow."