

“When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these? He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.” A second time he said to him, Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.” (John 21. 15 – 17)



Reflecting on this Theological Theme: “Do you love me?”, I focus on my dearly departed mother. Antoinette Campanelli died August 27, 2015, of pancreatic cancer in her home in Hamilton. It was a physically painful summer for her, as well as psychologically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. Our family supported her as best as we could: the ideal form of palliative care. And she was a very holy woman. The last lesson she taught me was how to die well.

The first year after her death was one of intense grieving. As a private mourner, I shed many tears. I prayed for her soul and I spoke with her often. The most common words were, “I hope you’re okay.”, “I’m praying for you.”, “I wish you were here.” and “Watch over our family.”

After a year or so, I received a consolation. God assured me that my mother was in Heaven. She was together with the Lord and our dearly departed family members. This assurance gave me great joy. Peace filled my heart. She had made it to the Promised Land. One day, I hope to be reunited with her and our family members and friends.

Lately, I’ve been missing my mother. Family events, road trips, just the two of us chatting: “Mom would have loved to be a part of this.” and “Mom should be here experiencing this with us.” Acutely, I’ve been missing her physical presence. I know she is with me, with us, spiritually. And this is a beautiful bond. However, just having my mother around (like she used to be).

And earlier this month, sometime around Thanksgiving, I received another consolation. My mother wrapped her heavenly arms around me. A spiritual embrace I truly felt. “Lorenzo, don’t worry, I’m here.” The physical and spiritual realities. The natural and supernatural worlds. Still separate but very close. “Thank you, Mom; you really are looking after our family.”

I know we all go through this: simply desiring our departed loved ones to be physically present again. Part of the grieving process; a long process. It’s not within our power but faith assures us that we’ll be reunited again. We get on with life: that’s how our deceased loved ones would want it. We walk by faith. The communion of saints.

I look forward to the Solemnity of All Saints and the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls Day) and the month of November. Traditionally, this month, we pray for our dearly departed loved ones. May we give them strength on their journey and may they do the same for us.

Those who have gone before us: family members, friends, colleagues. We pray for them. We still love them. They still love us. I feel this love very strongly from my mother. “Blessed are those who have died in the Lord; let them rest from their labours for their good deeds go with them. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.”

*By Lorenzo Campanelli, School Chaplain, Bishop P.F. Reding CSS*