

LOST FOR WORDS

By Bill Pugh

On a visit to someone terminally ill what can I say?

Anxieties surface. No matter how strong our faith, at times we are vulnerable.

Sometimes we panic. Every scene is different according to those present.

One day I visited an old lady terminally ill at Apollo Bay Hospital.

She lived at the foot of surrounding hills.

“Please read me Psalm 121,” she said.

“Every day I lift up my eyes to those hills, also please make it part of my funeral service.”

Other possible helpful readings may be in Psalm 23, John 14 and 2 Corinthians 15, or a hymn or poem.

Sometimes the gentle holding of a hand, or a touch of blessing on the forehead may be appropriate.

Principal Hector Maclean, of Ormond Theological Hall, told us this story.

As a young Minister he once visited a very sick old lady.

He did not know what to say, so he left embarrassed.

Next time he apologised to her for not saying anything.

She replied, “if you had said anything I would have screamed”.

Sometimes just being there is enough, waiting for a word, or just being a peaceful presence.

Reflection:

Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed.

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet!

Read 1 Corinthians 15: 35–58.

This is our faith.

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