

REMEMBER ME

By Bill Pugh



Thousands, maybe millions will die as a result of the COVID-19. So many funerals. Bucket loads of grief and grieving. This year we have lost a brother, younger, and a daughter, much younger, too young. Where is the justice in that? Why do the young die before their time and the old live on, creaking like us?

Years ago I undertook many years of theological study. The best professors taught me and an ordination came at the end. I had all the answers so I thought. Out in parishes I sat beside many beds where people suffered and passed away. And conducted many funeral services. All by the book.

But my experience of loss was still personal and real when it came to our family. It was expected of me to be strong and do the job I had been trained for. In regard to grief I had to develop a stiff upper lip. Six years of theological training surely prepared me for every situation. So I went on. Till one day the gloom became unbearable. And then our little dog became too arthritic to carry on.

Our loyal companion through many years of good fun, walks, holidays together in our van. With a vet's sensitive counsel Angie was put to sleep. We brought her home and buried her in our garden, always with us. But still I was not able to clear the gloom from my mind and heart. I went to a counsellor and was asked to share my personal experiences of family loss. When I came to our little dog Angie, I stopped and could not go. Silence, then I burst into tears. The wise counsellor said. "Angie has allowed you to grieve". I had never been able or allowed to do that. Funerals and other people's losses were my job. But from that day a load was lifted.

The loss of our brother and daughter is a terrible blow. Our grief is a work in progress. On Mother's Day our son-in-law who cared for our daughter so lovingly for two whole years presented my wife with a lovely rose. It is already planted and lovingly watered and cared for in our front garden. The name of the rose is Remember Me. And we do.