



Our Lady  
of Peace

HOSPICE & HOME HEALTH CARE

# *honesty heals* IN HOSPICE

Our Lady of Peace Education Series

*Honesty is critical during hospice* because it leads to cohesive acceptance and support, but it isn't always easy. Retired Our Lady of Peace Chaplain June Franko says a common thread for all is not wanting to hear that death is imminent, and not wanting to accept that it is.

After years of pastoral care for hospice patients and families, Jude knows it's not always easy for families to be honest with each other. Everyone deals with grief and loss in their own way and at their own pace, and there is no right or wrong way to accept the death of someone you love. Listening to each other and choosing your words carefully is key, along with patience and understanding. And, the important thing to remember is who is in charge and at the center of it all — the loved one who is dying.

Jude Franko says, "You can't fix family dynamics, but we can work with them." Sometimes it's difficult for people to move past anger. Jude encourages families to work on forgiveness, including forgiving themselves. Forgiveness and reconciliation are the greatest gifts you can give yourself, and each other.

Honesty becomes more important as a person draws closer to death. It's very common for mothers and fathers to choose to pass when their child/children are not there. Often times it happens when they go home

to shower and change clothes, so it's best not to delay conversations, and commit to speaking honestly, so there are no regrets when your loved one is gone.

Time in hospice can be a gift to families because it offers time and the space to speak honestly, but some find it difficult to find the words. Based on the work of Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, the following expressions of caring can be shared by the person who is dying to loved ones, as well as by loved ones to the person who is dying. They are called the 4 Gifts of Hospice:

## 1. I'M SORRY, PLEASE FORGIVE ME

A time to share thoughts and feelings, a time when it is possible that a forgiveness and reconciliation are experienced. We can say we are sorry for anything that may have gone wrong between us in our relationship with another person.

## 2. I LOVE YOU

Sometimes a more meaningful "I love you" is able to be expressed after an honest "I'm sorry" has been heard. People like to hear the words "I love you" said out loud. This expression of caring is not something to take for granted.

### 3. THANK YOU

Thank you for who you have been in my life, my husband, my wife, my son, my daughter, my mother, my father, my sister, my brother, my friend. A time to do some life review, looking at the good times and maybe those not so good. Getting out the family photo album or videos and sharing, expressing one's thankfulness for who this person has been in my life.



### 4. GOODBYE, I'LL BE OKAY

This may be the hardest but nevertheless a most important one. It is both giving and receiving permission to let go. Not that there won't be pain and grieving, but it may be the time to say good-bye and let the other person know you will be okay.

The chaplains and staff at Our Lady of Peace is committed to helping patients and their families find the words to speak honestly with each other. Time after time, we've witnessed the emotional healing that comes from forgiveness and acceptance.



***We're here for you.***

We are passionate about community outreach.  
We would love to meet you and discuss how  
Our Lady of Peace can be a resource for you.

**651-789-5031**