

WORLD & NATION

Grieving is a necessity, says Arlington specialist

By Michael F. Flach
Catholic News Service

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The sudden violence of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon has forced Americans to think about their own vulnerability and mortality, said an authority on grief counseling.

"It could have happened to anyone of us," said Mila Ruiz Tecala, founder and director of the Center for Loss and Grief in Washington. "We have lost our sense of invulnerability. The illusion has been shattered that terrorism can't happen here in the U.S."

Tecala, who recently was appointed to the board of Catholic Charities in the Arlington Diocese, was the keynote speaker at a workshop on grief and loss the charity agency sponsored at Blessed Sacrament Church in Alexandria.

She has spent her professional career seeking to understand the grieving process that takes place after catastrophic events and individual tragedies. Following the Sept. 11 tragedies, she was asked to counsel employees of American Airlines, which experienced the loss of passengers and crew when one of its planes crashed into the Pentagon.

Grief, although not always connected to death, is the normal emotional reaction to any loss, Tecala said.

"Grief is a necessity. It is not a luxury. Those who avoid grief are like land mines. Anything can set them off," she said.

"We can't control when we are born or

when we die, but we can control how we live," Tecala continued. "There's nothing magical about dying well. We die the same way we live."

Grief, by itself, does not cause psychiatric problems, she added. "It's how we deal with grief that leads to problems."

Tecala said grief is a process of healing that often involves a series of emotions: anger, helplessness, fear, hatred, rage and violence.

When grief leads to hatred, it can take over your whole life, she said. "Hate is like a corrosive fluid. It only damages the vessel that holds it."

An important part of the grieving process is mourning, or the "public validation" of grief, said Tecala. "Isolation will not allow you to grieve."

"How can this event, which is so painful, transform us to make us better?" she asked. "We all need meaning in life, a reason to get up in the morning."

Ghosts from previous losses can complicate the grieving process, she said.

The tendency is to worry about how children will handle the loss of a parent or relative, but children are resilient in coping with loss, Tecala said.

Children who experience loss at a young age, either through death, divorce or separation, can't finish their grieving process until age 21 when they are physically and emotionally mature, she said.

The death of a child, on the other hand, is the hardest thing for a parent to deal with, Tecala said. "You lose your future. All the hopes and dreams of the parent die



Art Babych/CNS

Protest in Ottawa

Protesters display signs during rallies against the IMF and World Bank in Ottawa Nov. 17. Church-based organizations were among the 2,000 anti-globalization demonstrators who criticized the policies of capitalism and called on Canadians to create a just world.

with the death of a child."

To recover from such a devastating loss, parents must be able to reweave the tapestry of their lives, she said.

"Disenfranchised grief" is grief that is not affirmed by society, Tecala said. It could involve the death of a pet or the loss of a child through adoption, miscarriage or abortion.

"Forgiveness is an important component in the healing process," Tecala said. She also said making changes in one's life is an

other important element.

"By rebuilding your life you are honoring the person who died," she said.

Symptoms of grief often include crying, sleep disturbance or lack of appetite. "When grief has no outlet it can lead to physical problems such as headaches and pain," Tecala said.

Studies show that 40 percent of surviving spouses after age 55 will die within 18 months of their spouse. "It's not suicide," she said, but rather they lose the will to live and succumb to a preexisting illness.

Tecala cautioned professional counselors in attendance to understand and respect their limits and abilities. "We can't juggle more than three balls at a time," she said. "Some of us can't even juggle two."

Darkness
to
Light

**Advent
Prayer Service**

Thursday,
December 6, 2001
7:00 p.m.

All are welcome!

Vigil for a Day of Fasting and Prayer

On Friday, December 7,
Sisters in religious congregations throughout the United States invite the public to join them in prayer and fasting for the healing of broken relationships in our world.
This prayer service on December 6 is a prelude to that day.

Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse
4095 East Avenue

Catholic Courier (USPS 135-580)
Vol. 113 No. 8, Nov. 22, 2001
Published weekly except the last Thursday in December.
Subscription rates: single copy, 75¢; one-year subscription in U.S., \$20.00; Canada and foreign \$20.00 plus postage. Offices: 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624, 716/328-4340. Periodicals postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Catholic Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624.

Looking for
Quality Printing?

Call us today!

Through a special arrangement between Wayuga Press and the Catholic Courier Graphic's Department, you can now get quality, affordable typesetting and printing.

Give us a call for your next job!
COURIER GRAPHICS • 716-328-4340
WAYUGA PRESS • 315-754-6229

Your Money Deserves the Best!
Gen-See Makes The Difference

Earn More
Worry Less

Since 1975...

- Regular monthly checks
- Term 3, 4, or 5 years
- No fees
- Rate of interest guaranteed for term of certificate

GEN-SEE CAPITAL CORPORATION
CALL NOW... 1-800-507-4393



THE DIOCESE OF
OGDENBURG

Has an opening for the position of
Diocesan Fiscal Officer.
The person hired will be in charge of the various operations of the Diocesan Fiscal Office, including diocesan accounting, the supervision of health plan services and other insurance programs, the administration of the Lay Employees' Retirement Fund and other employee benefit programs and diocesan investments. A minimum of five to ten years experience in accounting and fiscal management is demanded. Professional qualifications expected include the attainment of CPA status or an MBA degree.
A competitive salary commensurate with experience is being offered. Because the person will share ecclesiastical office, he or she must be a practicing member of the Roman Catholic Church.
For a job description, please contact
Mgr. John R. Murphy
or Rev. Terry R. LaValley
PO Box 389, Ogdensburg, NY 13669
Phone 315-393-2920



Leo M. Bean Bryan S. Bean Stephen D. Bean David M. Bean

"A Tradition of Family Service"
Family Owned and Operated

LEO M. BEAN

FUNERAL HOME, INC.

2771 Chili Avenue • 426-7830