WE ARE ALL TERMINALLY ILL

TODAY, WE REMEMBER OUR DEAR DEAD. WE REMEMBER JOHN DONNE'S CLASSIC STATEMENT: DON'T ASK FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS! IT TOLLS FOR YOU! WE REMEMBER THAT WE HAVE ONE LIFE TO LIVE! TWILL SOON BE PAST! ONLY WHAT'S DONE FOR GOD & CHRIST WILL LAST! NEWSPAPERS / T.V. / HEART-RENDING CATASTROPHES: KARI SPITZER [FORMER RESIDENT AT MARY HOUSE] WALKING HER TWO LITTLE GIRLS TO NURSERY SCHOOL / HIT BY CAR / DEAD IN THEIR TRACKS..... PICTURE OF CHEERLEADERS, PARENTS, COACHES GATHERED AT TWIN LAKES PARK TO PRAY FOR TIA JONES & HER SISTER JESSICA WHO WERE INJURED IN AUTO ACCIDENT..... TEENAGERS IN GOLIBERG, SWEDEN – 60 KILLED IN RAGING FIRE / 180 INJURED..... I ALSO HEARD ABOUT MAN / WIFE DYING OF CANCER / STANDING AT HER BEDSIDE --- WELL MEANING PEOPLE GATHER AROUND HIM / TELL HIM ABOUT THIS NEW, NUTRITIONAL SYSTEM & THEIR PRAYERS ARE GOING TO CURE HIS WIFE. MEANT WELL, BUT CRUEL! HIS WIFE DIED & LATER HE SAID, WE TALK TOO MUCH ABOUT DELIVERANCE FROM DISEASE. WE OUGHT TO BE TALKING ABOUT THE MILLIONS & MILLIONS OF PEOPLE WHO ARE GIVEN THE COMFORT & PEACE OF GOD AS THEY FACE DEATH..... WE ARE ALL TERMINALLY ILL & THIS BUSINESS OF BEING HEALED IS ONLY A REPRIEVE! SOONER OR LATER, EVERYONE WHO IS HEALED IS GOING TO DIE. BEING REALLY HEALED IS TO FINE THE COMFORT OF GOD IN YOUR FINAL HOURS. I HAVE WATCHED COUNTLESS PEOPLE DIE WITH GREAT GRACE & I HOPE THAT WHEN IT COMES MY TURN TO DIE I CAN SAY WITH HENRI NOUWEN THAT MY DEATH WILL BE A GIFT TO THOSE WHO KNOW ME – THAT MY DEATH WILL BE A WAY OF PRESENTING FAITH & HOPE & LOVE TO THOSE AROUND ME.....BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN / BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO WEEP / GOD HIMSELF WILL COMFORT THEM / GOD HIMSELF WILL MAKE THEM LAUGH! HAVE YOU EVER BEEN COMFORTED BY GOD? I BELIEVE THAT GOD IS OUT TO MAKE ALL OF US JUST LIKE HIMSELF. HE DOESN'T WANT US TO BE DOWNHEARTED OR FRIGHTENED BY ALL THAT IS GOING ON AROUND US. GOD IS IN THE MIDST OF ALL THINGS --- & HE WANTS TO BRING ALL OF US BACK TO HIMSELF. AND THE GREAT PROOF OF THAT IS JESUS XP BECAME ONE OF US / JUMPED INTO OUR ~~SIN~~ / like BECAME ONE OF US. HE DID THAT TO RECONCILE US / TO BRING US BACK TO GOD / TO MAKE US LIKE HIMSELF! ..... AND SO AS WE CELEBRATE THIS FEAST OF ALL SAINTS, WE CAN EITHER BE ON GOD'S WAY OR IN GOD'S WAY / BE A STEPPING STONE OR A STUMBLING BLOCK FOR WHAT GOD IS TRYING TO DO. LET ME BE CLEAR ABOUT THIS! GOD IS EITHER TRYING TO RECONCILE ALL PEOPLE TO HIMSELF & WE ARE CALLED TO BE RECONCILERS WITH HIM / THAT

WHEREVER THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER / BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS / HELPING PEOPLE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER ---- T H E R E I S G O D ! WHEREVER PEOPLE GATHER TOGETHER TO CREATE COMMUNITY IN JESUS XP – T H E R E I S GOD ! AND WHEREVER THERE IS DIVISIVENESS --- G O D I S N O T T H E R E ! WE XIANS KNOW A GREAT SECRET: THE NAME OF OUR SPECIES IS JESUS CHRIST! AND WE ARE ALL BECOMING LIKE HIM! THIS IS HIW PROMISE: I AM GOING O PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU.... I WILL COME AGAIN.... I AM THE RESURRECTION & THE LIFE ... .. FROM BEGINNING TO END JESUS' WHOLE LIFE WAS A DEMONSTRATION OF THE REALITY THAT IF YOU ARE GOING TO LIVE THIS EARTHLY LIFE, YOU ARE GOING TO EXPERIENCE P A I N ! TO LIVE IS TO H U R T ! ..... PASTOR CALLED LITTLE CHILDREN TOGETHER & ASKED, WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO TO BE SAVED? LITTLE BOY SAID, S I N . / THEN ASKED, WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO TO GO TO HEAVEN? LITTLE BOY SAID, D I E ! DO YOU CATCH? THE WAY OF THE CROSS LEADS H O M E ! .... EARLY IN MORNING, PASTOR CALLED TO HOME OF YOUNG MOTHER / BACK IN DAYS OF NO AIR CONDITIONING. MOM HAD PLACED HER 2 YR. OLD TODDLER IN RM. UPSTAIRS / OPENED WINDOW SO HE COULD CATCH A BREEZE WHILE HE SLEPT... BOY WAKENED / CRAWLED OUT WINDOW / TUMBLED FROM ROOF / WAS IMPALED ON PICKET FENCE. / PASTOR HELD MOTHER / CRIED WITH HER.... AFTER LONG TIME, SHE ASKED, WHERE WAS GOD WHEN MY LITTLE BOY WAS IMPALED ON THAT STAKE? PASTOR JUST SHOOK HIS HEAD: I DON'T KNOW / PROBABLY SAME PLACE HE WAS WHEN HIS LITTLE BOY WAS IMPALED ON A STAKE! GOD KNOWS OUR PAIN, & WE CAN'T GET AWAY FROM IT! ..... JOHN WESLEY ONCE ASKED, WHAT IS THE GREATEST PROOF YOU HAVE EVER SEEN OF JESUS CHRIST? THOUGHT / REPLIED, MY PEOPLE DIE WELL! GOD IS NOW SOME KIND OF IMPERSONAL FORCE! HE IS WARM & GRACIOUS & WITH YOU IN YOUR PAIN..... PASTOR WAS ASKED, WHAT WERE THE MOST OUTRAGEOUS WORDS JESUS EVER SPOKE? DAYS & WEEKS PASTED. FINALLY CALLED BACK & SAID, THE MOST OUTRAGEOUS WORDS JESUS EVER SPOKE WERE WHEN HE WAS WITH THE SCRIBES & PHARISEES & RELIGIOUS EXPERTS & HE LOOKED UP & SAID, F A T H E R / ARAMAIC ABBA / ENGLISH DADA / MAMA --- OUTRAGEOUS BECAUSE NO ONE EVER BEFORE SPOKE OF THE HOLY, MIGHTY GOD OF THE UNIVERSE AS ABBA, DADA, MAMA! AND THAT SAYS AGAIN THAT OUR GOD IS A GOD OF GRACE & LOVE. THINK ABOUT IT. THE ONLY GOD OF GRACE & LOVE & MERCY OUR CHILDREN WILL EVER SEE IS IN YOU & ME! WHAT AN AWESOME CALLING & RESPONSIBILITY WE HAVE!