

Graduation Day

By Susan Abbott, Quincy IL

In loving memory of Jim Abbott – 1978-1992



Today is Graduation Day – a day when children don the cloak of adulthood. They leave the structure of their home to find the structure of their lives. They scatter in many directions – each to the beat of his own drum, each to follow his own heart.

Today is Graduation Day – and I am sad. My child will not be among his classmates as they are handed their diplomas. My child will not participate in the proms and excitement of this time. My child will not be there. Is he forgotten? Does not one mind remember him or one heart feel his presence? Please Lord, let him be a part of this day even if I don't know it. Let one person for one second think of him and say, "I wish Jim were here today."

For today is Graduation Day – for everyone else's children but not for mine – not for mine. I could wax philosophical and say that he has already graduated – that he has made the most important step of all.

But this doesn't help the ache in my heart or fill the hole left there. On other days, I can sometimes feel okay that he is in heaven, but, today, I want him here. I want him to go to the prom and wear the cap and gown and receive his diploma. I want to see his smile and take his picture and rent his tux.

I want him going to college and choosing his courses and deciding what his future will be. I want – it does no good to want or to wish. These things can never be. I must face this day as I've faced thousand of others – with longing, with pain, and with strength – God's strength.

This is what keeps me from crumpling into a ball of despair – this is what keeps me from giving up and giving in – this is what keeps me from looking down in abject helplessness and lets me look up with new hope. The strength from God gives me the strength to live – and the strength to love – and the strength to continue.

Today is Graduation Day – I think I can live through it – I think I can overcome what it brings with it – I know I can find my way once again through the longing, through the darkness, through the pain 'til once again I see the Light of tomorrow ...

Yesterday was Graduation Day. And I'm still here....

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