

Christian Comment for Hampshire Chronicle

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IN MEMORY OF LIZ SLINN RIP

Moira Redmond writes: I am taking over a share in this column in the saddest of circumstances: my friend Liz Tatham Slinn, who wrote it for seven years, died on 2nd March after a short cruel illness. You may remember that she wrote movingly about it in her last column a few weeks ago.

We were fellow-parishioners at St Peter's Catholic Church in Winchester, and had known each other for 30 years. She touched many lives, and will be much missed by her family and friends, by the wider community, and, I know, by the many people who read and appreciated her regular columns here.

Anyone who knew her or knew of her will know that one of the most striking things about her was her Christian faith: it was so strong and so important to her, and she died very much held by the church she loved so much.

But still it's always hard to accept death. We want to know 'why' and sometimes there isn't a why. Christians don't have the answer to that question, but they have some guidance to help them through hard times.

In the here and now we can't always see the pattern of life, and sometimes the sorrow and the hardships can leave us feeling unconsolated. Christians have faith in God's plan, and they have hope of an afterlife, and of God's forgiveness and mercy. And one more important thing to give us consolation, something we all have, whether Christian or not. St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (13:13) contains one of the most famous lines in the New Testament: 'And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.' We've heard them so many times, at weddings and funerals, but still they hit home to us every time - there's a reason people remember them and want to hear them again. Paul has already told us that love 'is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. .

.It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.
Love never fails.'

Love is what is left, it stays with us, it survives those who have died.
That is part of God's love for us, and part of His plan.

There is always sadness at funerals, but at the same time we try to
make them a celebration of life, remembering the dead person with love
and joy. We mourn them, we miss them, but we ask God's help to
balance our feelings, and we ask Him to look after our dead friend, to
call them home. We remember them with love – and isn't that how we'd
all like to be remembered?

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