

### A. BASIC PATIENT DATA

Chaplain – Robert Baral

Patient – XY, 60+ year old female

day of admission – 8<sup>th</sup>

Length of 2<sup>nd</sup> visit – 40 minutes

Unit – Emergency Room to Intensive Care Unit to medical/surgical

Religion – Catholic

Significant Others – son & daughter

Theme: “A Near Death Experience (NDE) Case: A Brief Sleep in Heaven - She Doesn’t Want to Be Here Yet.

She Wants to Be with Her Family on Earth.”

### B. FACTS OF THE CASE

I responded to a call to the Emergency Room for a family having a difficult time coping over their critically ill loved one. As I stepped off the patient transport elevator at ER level, I encountered the patient with staff on their way to the CAT scan unit. The patient was intubated and was seizing. The Nurse told me there was a large family in ER family room who were very distraught and in need of Chaplain support.

As directed by the Nurse, I met with Mrs. Y’s 3 adult children, their spouses and several friends over 2 hours in Emergency Room and then in Intensive Care Unit. A son and his wife had gone to the patient’s home this morning, found her unresponsive in bed, “barely breathing” and called 911. I remained among them as they were told by the ER Doctor that the prognosis for the patient was very poor for any meaningful neurological recovery because of likely prolonged downtime and her brain not receiving enough oxygen.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> day since the patient’s near death, I returned a phone call to one of Mrs. Y’s sons, who asked me to revisit his mother. He reported that she was “Doing very well, had had a remarkable recovery, was fully awake with no brain damage and was going home” later that day. I revisited with the patient and one of her daughters later that day as requested.

### C. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The patient, Mrs. X Y, lives alone. X has many adult children and their families, all local and very supportive of her. Mrs. Y has one daughter who is especially close to her. The patient and family are Catholic, except a son, who is Protestant. He is the mainstay of Faith and comfort to this family in difficult times. He hopes to become a Minister.

### D. PATIENT-FAMILY MEMBER'S EXPRESSED CONCERNS

1. daughter was ecstatically happy that patient had recovered fully against all initial indications; 2. daughter was to be the primary caregiver of the patient in her return home; 3. patient and daughter are eager for patient's return home later that day; 4. patient shares details of her "Near Death Experience" (NDE); 5. patient shares "tears of joy" as she shares her feelings; 6. patient briefly expresses fear of never wanting to go through such an experience again; 7. patient expresses thankfulness to GOD, her family and hospital staff for her very unexpected and miraculous recovery.

### E. SPIRITUAL ASSESSMENT

1. Patient and family realize very intensely that patient almost died; 2. family had been initially despairing of all hope for patient's recovery and had been overwhelmed; 3. family had entered anticipatory grieving since the first day of admission, when they were told the prognosis for recovery of the patient was "Zero;" 4. Family turned to their Christian Faith in this time of crisis, praying for a miracle; 5. Patient and family have grown much closer to GOD, The Church and one another through this crisis and unexpected happy outcome; 6. They realize that the patient has serious medical issues that may result in her death at any time; 7. They look forward to enjoying more time together as a much closer family in the time the patient has left.

### F. SPIRITUAL CARE PROVIDED

1. Advised patient and daughter that the patient's son had called me and had asked me to revisit them today; 2. Asked for permission to revisit them; 3. Listened attentively; 4. Provided a non-judgmental, empathetic space for them to share their story; 5. Allowed patient and daughter to share their intense emotions as they needed to; 6. Reflected back details of patient's Near Death Experience (NDE) to assure she knew she was clearly heard;

Further, 7. Asked the patient what the nature of her tears were and allowed her to share; 8. Joined patient and daughter in their joyful celebration of the patient's remarkable recovery, story and blessings for their family; 9. Asked if there was anything further I could do for them at end of visit; 10. Advised I would keep them all in my prayers and to please call if we can be of further support; 11. Thanked patient and daughter for allowing me to visit them again.

#### G. OBSERVED OUTCOME

1. Patient and daughter thanked me for revisiting as the son had requested; 2. They gave me permission to revisit; 3. Patient and daughter shared freely; 4. They felt safe to share details of feelings and experiences; 5. Daughter was joyful and animated, while the patient shared "tears of joy;" 6. Patient confirmed that I had heard her Near Death Experience (NDE) story correctly and seemed happy to be affirmed re same;

Further, 7. Patient explained why she was crying; 8. Patient shared plans for what she will hopes to do at home with family; 9. I allowed patient and daughter to control any desire for religious care as they wished. 10. They thanked me for my pastoral support and for keeping them in my prayers; 11. They thanked me for revisit.

#### H. CHAPLAIN'S PREPARATION

I was severely pressed for time that day with many cases and pages, as I was on call in this very large hospital. I prayed to GOD to give me a quiet spirit to listen to whatever they had to say. I had no idea that I was going to hear a NDE story. I expected to find the patient with some severe and lingering neurological deficit. I determined to let the patient and family completely control this visit.

#### I. INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

As I approached the patient's room, the daughter recognized me, called me by name and engaged me in the hallway in conversation. She greeted me happily and shook my hand. She was animated and waved her hands as she spoke. It took several minutes to move the conversation into the patient's room. The patient was sitting in a bedside comfort chair in a 2-bed room. Space was cramped.

The staff and family for the patient in the other bed were in and out of the room. The patient was dressed and fully alert. She immediately greeted me by name, smiled and gave me her hand. Her speech was clear and her thoughts were fully lucid. I was amazed. The daughter sat on the bed. There was no place for me to sit, so I remained standing.

## J. THE VISIT

P = Patient Mrs. X Y; D = Daughter Z; C = Chaplain

D1 – [An attractive middle aged woman approaches me as I near the patient’s room. She was standing outside the door of the patient’s room. She is smiling broadly. She extends her hand to me.] Chaplain Bob! So good to see you! My Mom is doing so well! She’s going home today!

C1 – [I don’t recognize this lady, but I know who she is. There were so many loved ones I had met 8 days ago during the initial crisis.] Hello, Z! I am glad to hear that your Mom is doing well. What room is your Mom in?

D2 – [Daughter points to her mother’s room.] Right here. She is going home today!

C2 – [I remain cautious and guarded as to what state I will find the patient in neurologically.] That is good news.

D3 – Chaplain Bob, you won’t believe how well she is doing. We thought we were going to lose her!

C3 – [I don’t believe yet that the family’s assessment is accurate. I wonder what I’m walking in to.] I remember that first day. That was tough for all of you. Your brother A called me. I spoke to him this morning. He asked me to drop by and say hello to you and your Mom today before she went home.

D4 – Yes, I know. He’s very religious. He wants to be a Minister. We’ve been praying for a miracle for her. GOD heard our prayers!

C4 – I remember meeting your brother A when you came in with your family. I am glad that your family’s prayers have been heard by GOD. [I have momentary memory flashes of a CPR “save” case when I was a Paramedic decades ago - an older lady who never woke up – and a family who was so thankful for my care in spite of the outcome.]

D5 – The Doctor thinks she had sleep apnea. That she didn’t get enough oxygen and that caused the seizures.

C5 – I see.

D6 – So she’ll have to wear the sleep apnea machine at night. I’ll be taking care of her. I’ll make sure she uses the machine at night.

D7 – [Daughter at last lets go of my hand.] She moves to the door of her mother’s room.] Mom! Guess who’s here! It’s Chaplain Bob! [Daughter sits on the patient’s bed]

P1 – Hello Chaplain Bob! Please come in! [Patient is sitting up in comfort chair, fully awake, speaking clearly, smiling.]

C6 – [I take the patient’s hand. I am amazed and suddenly feel very joyful.] Hello Mrs. Y. I am so happy to see you again! Your son A called me and asked me to visit you and your daughter Z today... [Conversation continues]

C7 – I am glad to hear you’re going home today! [I join in their joyfulness at this unexpected miraculous outcome.] How are you feeling?

P2 – I went to bed one night last week at home and I woke up here in the hospital!

C8 – [I recall vividly seeing Mrs. Y on a ventilator when I first met her family in ER and into the ICU 8 days ago. It was hellish for them. I shudder to think this lady might remember waking up on a ventilator. I address this directly.] X, what was the first thing you remember waking up?

P3 – I have 4 grandchildren. When I woke up, the first thing I saw was the face of my favorite granddaughter over me!

C9 – Yes...?

P4 – Now my granddaughter is dating a young man whose mother died. And he gave my granddaughter his mother’s favorite Crucifix. [pause] The second thing I saw when I woke up was That same Crucifix!

C10 – The 2 things you first saw when you woke up in our hospital were first, your favorite granddaughter’s face; second, The Crucifix that your granddaughter’s boyfriend gave her that belonged to his Mom. And that’s become your family’s Crucifix. [Short silent pause. I am so thankful to GOD that this case has turned out so well! I am smiling broadly now, as are the patient and her daughter.] Thank you for sharing that with me!

P5 – Chaplain Bob, I’ve got to tell you about this incredible experience I had. [Patient pauses. Her smile fades and looks serious. Her eyes are locked on mine.]

D8 – [Daughter takes her mother’s hands.]

C11 – [I kneel down and lean against cabinet.] Go ahead X. I am listening.

P6 – [Patient speaks slowly and clearly.] I dreamed I woke up and looked down at my feet. There was a toe tag on my toe. It said “Welcome to Heaven.” I saw a bright light. I heard a voice behind me say, “She doesn’t want to be here yet. She wants to be with her family on earth.” Then I actually woke up. And of course, there was no toe tag. I looked up and first I saw my favorite granddaughter. Then I saw our family Crucifix hanging on one of the machines.

C12 – [As a new Chaplain, I have never been privileged to hear a NDE experience in this detail directly from one of my patients until now. Maybe I was afraid to be listening too closely through all those years as a Paramedic and a Nurse? I recall suddenly that my brother-in-law’s Nurse reported to us that, as he was dying, he was actually clinically dead for a short time, then he started breathing again on his own and woke up long enough to tell the Nurse this: He was aware that he had died. He saw a bright light. He heard a voice say “It’s not your time yet. Go back and tell people to have Faith.” He immediately woke up and shared this with his Nurse. He then lapsed back into unconsciousness.]

C13 – [Brief pause. I reflect back the story to affirm to Mrs. Y that I have heard her. ] You were conscious that you woke up and looked down at your feet. You saw a toe tag on your toe that read, “Welcome to Heaven!” You saw a bright light. You heard a voice from behind say, “She doesn’t want to be here yet. She wants to be with her family on earth.” You then actually woke up. And when you did, you first saw the face of your favorite grandchild. And then you saw your family’s Crucifix. Is that right?

P7 – Yes! That’s right, Chaplain Bob!

C14 – X, thank you for sharing that beautiful experience with me.

P8 – What do you think of that?

C15 – It sounds to me like GOD knew that you wanted to have more time with your family here before you go to Heaven. What do you think of your experience?

P9 – [Patient begins to cry and smiles broadly at the same time.] GOD sent me back. [Patient looks up at her daughter, who is tearful and smiling.]

C16 – GOD sent you back. He has given you and your family a great miracle in answer to your prayers! [Pause.] Can you tell me about your tears?

P10 – They are tears of joy. I don’t want to go through that again! But I’m so happy! I am the most blessed woman on earth right now!

D9 – Thank you, Chaplain Bob, for being there with us.

C17 – That first day was especially a very difficult day for all of you. I am so thankful to have been able to be there with your family, and now with both of you today! [I look with joy at them both as they hold hands.] And what are you and your family hoping for now?

P11 – I'm going home to spend all the time I have with my family and my grandkids! I have a wonderful family!

D10 – [Nurse comes in to get the patient ready for discharge. I was not aware the Nurse was at the doorway. The Nurse is smiling and joyful for them with me. The daughter stands to give her Mom more tissues.] Thank you Chaplain Bob! Can you say a prayer with us?

C18 – [I pray with the patient, daughter and Nurse around These Words:]

**PSALM 143:1-11 - A Psalm of David.**

<sup>1</sup> Hear my prayer, O LORD,

Give ear to my supplications!

In Your faithfulness answer me,

<sup>5</sup> I remember the days of old;

I meditate on all Your works;

<sup>1</sup> I muse on the work of Your hands.

<sup>6</sup> I spread out my hands to You;

My soul longs for You like a thirsty land.

<sup>8</sup> Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning,

For in You do I trust;

Cause me to know the way in which I should walk,

For I lift up my soul to You.

<sup>9</sup> Deliver me, O LORD, from... [the adversary];

<sup>1</sup> In You I take shelter.

<sup>10</sup> Teach me to do Your will,

For You are my GOD;

Your Spirit is good.

Lead me in the land of uprightness.

<sup>11</sup> Revive me, O LORD, for Your Name's sake!

For Your righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble. <sup>1</sup>

C18 – Thank you for letting me visit with you again today, X and Z! Please tell your son, your brother A and all your family, I send my prayers and join you all in thanksgiving to GOD! [More conversation. I shake hands with the daughter. The patient reaches out to hug me. I close the visit and exit.]

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<sup>1</sup> NKJV, PSALM 143:1-11.

## K. THE NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE [NDE]

The International Association for Near-Death Studies [IANDS] defines a “Near-Death Experience,” [NDE] as “...a profound psychological and spiritual phenomenon that typically occurs during a trauma, health crisis or clinical death...,” each NDE being “unique” to each person who experiences it, but having certain group “common features,”<sup>2</sup> including: “1) Intense emotions: commonly of profound peace, well-being, love; others marked by fear, horror, loss. 2) A perception of seeing one's body from above (called an out-of-body experience, or OBE), sometimes watching medical resuscitation efforts or moving instantaneously to other places. 3) Rapid movement through darkness, often toward an indescribable light.”<sup>3</sup>

Further, “4) A sense of being ‘somewhere else,’ in a landscape that may seem like a spiritual realm or world. 5) Incredibly rapid, sharp thinking and observations. 6) Encounter with deceased loved ones, possibly sacred figures (The Judges, JESUS, a Saint) or unrecognized beings, with whom communication is mind-to-mind; these figures may seem consoling, loving, or terrifying. 7) A life review, reliving actions and feeling their emotional impact on others. 8) In some cases, a flood of knowledge about life and the nature of the universe. 9) Sometimes a decision to return to the body.”<sup>4</sup>

The 1975 Moody NDE survey lists a number of experiences of such patients: Ineffability;<sup>5</sup> hearing the news of one's death; peace; music or noise; tunnel; out-of-body experience; meeting others; “Being of Light;” life review; border or limit; coming back to life (voluntarily or involuntarily); having told others; a felt need to talk, or fear of talking about the NDE experience; attitude and lifestyle changes; new views of death, such as decreased fear and belief in survival after death.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> 2, IANDS, definition, “Near-Death Experience,” or “NDE.” <http://www.iands.org/> Retrieved 2/02/2009. It is noted re NDE's that some “similar experiences can happen spontaneously in emotionally intense situations or during every-day life.”

<sup>3</sup> 2, IANDS, “Characteristics of Near-Death Experience.” [http://www.iands.org/nde\\_index/ndes/characteristics.html](http://www.iands.org/nde_index/ndes/characteristics.html) Retrieved 2/03/2009.

<sup>4</sup> 2, IANDS, Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> 3, Dictionary.com, definition, “ineffability - 1. incapable of being expressed or described in words; inexpressible: ineffable joy; 2. not to be spoken because of its sacredness; unutterable: The ineffable Name of The Deity.”

<sup>6</sup> 4, Athappilly et al, “Do Prevailing Societal Models Influence Reports of Near-Death Experiences?...” *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, Volume 194(3), March 2006, p 218-222. “Table 2. Features of the Moody Model in NDE's Reported Before and After 1975.”



Duffy and Olson offer this prescription for care of patients who have had a NDE: 1) "...be a nonjudgmental, active listener." 2) "Don't challenge or trivialize his experience." 3) "...don't assume he's had a 'religious' experience or define it for him." 4) Let him tell you about his experience and how he interprets it." 5) Encourage the patient "...to share the experience with his family so the NDE doesn't become an isolating experience for him." 6) Educate the family that NDE's can be profound, life changing events that may change the patient's values and priorities and relationships. 7) Appropriate referrals for further patient and family support.<sup>7</sup>

#### L. ANALYSIS OF PATIENT AND FAMILY

The patient Mrs. Y is joyful in thanksgiving to GOD for allowing her to fully recover from a near-fatal medical catastrophe. She is deeply imbedded in a loving family and cherishes being with them, as they do with her. This NDE has placed a seal of GOD's Hand on this lady and her loved ones deep within their souls. It affirms for them all that they hold most important in life, which is love of GOD and one another. They will now live each day and moment in greater awe and appreciation for the gifts that The Creator gives them with each breath they take. The patient and family's Christian Faith provides a framework for them to understand the almost lethal medical event this lady suffered, her miraculous recovery and the NDE itself.

#### M. ANALYSIS OF YOURSELF AS THE CHAPLAIN

My pastoral care of this NDE patient included: 1) Empathetic and non-judgmental listening. 2) Affirming the feelings related to the experience itself as valid. 3) Being willing to admit to the reality of the patient's experience within our shared traditional Christian perspective; 4) Teaching that NDE's are well documented spiritual experiences reported by many subjects; 5) authentically joining patient and family in making sense of the NDE, while letting them frame its meaning. 6) It being a very positive, peace-giving and awe-inspiring experience, affirming it as a Gift of GOD in answer to prayers.

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<sup>7</sup> 5, Duffy and Olson, "Supporting a Patient After a Near-Death Experience." Nursing 2007, Volume 37, Number 4, p 47-48.

I found no conflict between how the patient and family expressed and understood the NDE and our shared traditional Christian theology and Faith. As I listened, I felt an aura of being privileged to hear an awesome, positive, joy-filling mystical event of The Divine in these people's lives. The most important pastoral care I rendered for Mrs. Y and her family was to be an affirming attentive listener and validating the experience & miraculous aftermath as a Gift of GOD. This allowed me to authentically join them in their great happiness that Mrs. Y was alive and had fully recovered, as well as their newfound appreciation for the preciousness of life, love and faith.

#### N. MY THEOLOGY AFFIRMS THE POSSIBILITY OF THE NDE.

JESUS CHRIST raised Lazarus from the grave. He says to the sister Martha in JOHN 11:25, "...I AM The Resurrection, and The Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." <sup>8</sup> Martha confesses in JOHN 11:27, "...Yea, Lord: I believe that Thou art The CHRIST, The Son of GOD, Which should come into the world." <sup>9</sup>

If The Lord Himself raised Lazarus from the grave after 3 days, The One Incarnate Who creates and sustains all things by His Word, it is a small thing for people to have a mystical NDE experience. For The Lord Himself arose again from the grave on The Third Day. So The Risen CHRIST appeared to The Apostles and said to them in JOHN 20:21-22, "...Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye The HOLY GHOST." <sup>10</sup>

So my Christian Faith informs my beliefs about the nature of man's existence and a life after death. 1) GOD makes man as both body and soul. GENESIS 2:7, "And The LORD GOD formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." <sup>11</sup> 2) Though the body dies, the soul lives on to stand before The LORD. HEBREWS 9:27, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this The Judgment." <sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> 6, KJV, JOHN 11:25.

<sup>9</sup> 6, KJV, JOHN 11:27.

<sup>10</sup> 6, KJV, JOHN 20:21-22.

<sup>11</sup> 6, KJV, GENESIS 2:7.

<sup>12</sup> 6, KJV, HEBREWS 9:27.

3) The eternity of the afterlife begins with a man's soul standing before The Almighty. ROMANS 14:10-12, "...for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of CHRIST. For it is written, As I live, saith The Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to GOD. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to GOD." <sup>13</sup>

4) But The Mercy of The LORD is great because His Love for us is great. EXODUS 34:5-7, "And The LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with... [Moses] there, and proclaimed The Name of The LORD. And The LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." <sup>14</sup> JOHN 3:16, "For GOD so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." <sup>15</sup>

5) GOD's sovereign will for each of us, from moment to moment in this world, and for eternity in the next, is known fully only to GOD. I TIMOTHY 1:17, "Now unto The King eternal, immortal, invisible, The only wise GOD, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." <sup>16</sup>

It does not surprise me, then, to see that The Almighty determines the moment of physical death, when a man's soul is called before His throne. In a Near Death Experience, when the body is near death or has actually died, GOD alone has the power and pleasure to decree when the soul's separation from the physical body is to be permanent. He may therefore command, "Not yet, o soul of man! Return to your physical body. I have more work for you to do. I have more Divine Mercy to pour out upon you on earth. I have more souls to draw unto Me by the testimony of your restored life!"

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<sup>13</sup> 6, KJV, ROMANS 14:10-12.

<sup>14</sup> 6, KJV, EXODUS 34:5-7.

<sup>15</sup> 6, KJV, JOHN 3:16.

<sup>16</sup> 6, KJV, I TIMOTHY 1:17.

### O. HOW THIS CASE TOUCHED ME AND WHY

First, when my brother-in-law was actively dying of cancer in 1999, he had become unconscious. In our absence for a short time, he had apparently had a short period of clinical death, where he lost both his breathing and heartbeat. We were not aware of this until we returned to the bedside. The Nurse reported this to us, and that when his vital signs returned, he woke up and told the Nurse about what happened before lapsing back into unconsciousness. He saw a bright light and heard a voice tell him, "Go back and testify of Me." He died several days later. It was apparently a very calming and peaceful experience for him, while reassuring for us. We received it as a Gift of GOD's Love.

Second, my elderly mother – who has entered early dementia - shared with me last month an experience that, while not falling under the definition of a NDE, was an extraordinary and reassuring spiritual experience. My father died in 1991. My parents were married in 1957 and divorced in 1965. They had very bitter support, custody and visitation battles over the years during my childhood in family court. Yet my mother has remained in love with my father even now.

When I gently broke the news about my father's death to my mother, she had the experience of one night soon after of lying awake on her bed and seeing what she identified as her deceased husband, my father. He said to her words that she had longed to hear for several decades, "It's okay. I'm here for you." He then vanished. It never happened again.

My mother never told anyone about this experience until she shared it with me recently. I remained the only person in the world - until this record - that knows she had this experience. She told me the reason that she never shared this with anyone was, "They would think I was mentally ill." I listened in a truly non-judgmental and pastoral manner with love and respect due my mother as her son. I was able to tell her that, in fact, such experiences are encountered by some people as part of the grieving process of mourning when a loved one dies, that it was in no way a sign of "mental illness," but rather a sign of her love for her husband.

I asked her, “Mom, was this a comforting experience for you? Did it give you peace about Dad?” She answered, “Yes, very much so.” I affirmed to her this feeling and encouraged her, since it was a positive experience, to accept it as a Gift from GOD to assure her that 1) Dad was safe in Heaven; 2) that he was watching over and praying for her; 3) that in Heaven they would be happily together again forever. This brought great joy and peace to her. Seeing this in her, I truly concluded the experience - and my help in affirming it for her - were both Gifts of GOD’s Love - to both of us.

I suspect such spiritual experiences may be more common in intense, suppressed grief in the face of deep feelings of ongoing sorrow and loss for many, but who are afraid of sharing about the experience. My Mom has since begun to go back to Church with me and is joyfully reconnecting with The Catholic Faith of her youth. I did not find a need to challenge or address the validity and nature of the experience itself. My mother’s re-found Christian Faith helps her make sense of the event, gives her peace in her resolving long term grief, a certainty that my Dad is praying for her in Heaven, and that they will be together again some day Above.

#### P. FUTURE PASTORAL OPPORTUNITIES

It may be helpful for patients who have had a NDE to have their experience graded using a formal interview assessment scale, which may serve to 1) help them to recognize others have had authentic NDE’s with characteristics that may be in common with theirs; 2) that it does not mean they are having a mental breakdown; 3) and thus open possibilities for patients to feeling more open to talking about and seeking positive meaning from their NDE; 4) if the experience gives a greater sense of peace, resolution and blessing, I will offer the possibility that the experience was a Gift of GOD designed by Him to give comfort and reassurance.

Greyson's 1983 "Near-Death Experience Scale" offers this 16 point interview,<sup>17</sup> a tool to help us shepherd others, and be shepherded ourselves, through NDE's:

[1] Did time seem to speed up or slow down? 0 = No; 1 = Time seemed to go faster or slower than usual; 2 = Everything seemed to be happening at once; or time stopped or lost all meaning.

[2] Were your thoughts speeded up? 0 = No; 1 = Faster than usual; 2 = Incredibly fast

[3] Did scenes from your past come back to you? 0 = No; 1 = I remembered many past events; 2 = My past flashed before me, out of my control.

[4] Did you suddenly seem to understand everything? 0 = No; 1 = Everything about myself or others; 2 = Everything about the universe.

[5] Did you have a feeling of peace or pleasantness? 0 = No; 1 = Relief or calmness; 2 = Incredible peace or pleasantness.

[6] Did you have a feeling of joy? 0 = No; 1 = Happiness; 2 = Incredible joy

[7] Did you feel a sense of harmony or unity with the universe? 0 = No; 1 = I felt no longer in conflict with nature; 2 = I felt united or one with the world.

[8] Did you see, or feel surrounded by, a brilliant light? 0 = No; 1 = An unusually bright light; 2 = A light clearly of mystical or other-worldly origin.

[9] Were your senses more vivid than usual? 0 = No; 1 = More vivid than usual; 2 = Incredibly more vivid.

[10] Did you seem to be aware of things going on elsewhere, as if by ESP? 0 = No; 1 = Yes, but the facts have not been checked out; 2 = Yes, and the facts have been checked out.

[11] Did scenes from the future come to you? 0 = No; 1 = Scenes from my personal future; 2 = Scenes from the world's future.

[12] Did you feel separated from your body? 0 = No; 1 = I lost awareness of my body; 2 = I clearly left my body and existed outside it.

[13] Did you seem to enter some other, unearthly world? 0 = No; 1 = Some unfamiliar and strange place; 2 = A clearly mystical or unearthly realm.

[14] Did you seem to encounter a mystical being or presence, or hear an unidentifiable voice? 0 = No; 1 = I heard a voice I could not identify; 2 = I encountered a definite being, or a voice clearly of mystical or unearthly origin.

[15] Did you see deceased or religious spirits? 0 = No; 1 = I sensed their presence; 2 = I actually saw them.

[16] Did you come to a border or point of no return? 0 = No; 1 = I came to a definite conscious decision to return to life; 2 = I came to a barrier that I was not permitted to cross; or was sent back against my will.

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<sup>17</sup> 7, Rense et al, "A Rasch Scaling Validation of a 'Core' Near-Death Experience." British Journal of Psychology, Volume 95, p 161-177, 2004. "Appendix – Near-Death Experience Scale (Greyson, 1983)."

## Q. REFERENCES

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