

WORDS FOR RESTING OUR GRIEF

# A Pillow for my Heart



TEXT AND COMPILATION BY  
VERNA A HOLYHEAD SGS  
ILLUSTRATED BY LYNNE MUIR  
FOREWORD BY PATTY FAWKNER SGS

## *Foreword*

I remember the day so vividly. One hundred and eighty members of my congregation had gathered with great excitement, hope and anticipation for our six-yearly Chapter meeting. Proceedings had just begun when word came through that Verna Holyhead, the author and collector of reflections on grief in this book, had died of a massive stroke.

A truly good woman, Verna was also a most gifted teacher and writer. She was imbued with the riches of the Christian spiritual and scriptural tradition, and constantly mined the treasures of literature and the sacred texts of other faith traditions in her writing. Her turn of phrase was at once evocative, arresting and poetic.

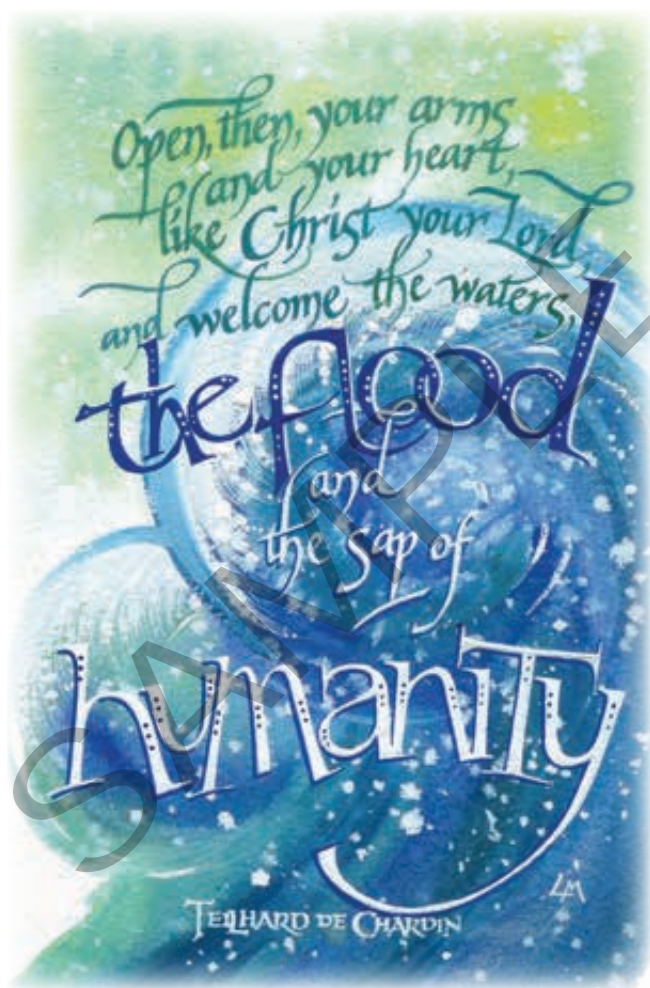
We were shocked by the news of Verna's death and instinctively reached out to each other seeking comfort and consolation. It was an experience of communal grief – the grief that Verna writes about in this much-loved book.

The writing in *A Pillow for my Heart* is vintage Verna. There is wisdom for the ages within these pages. There are no pious platitudes, no false dichotomy between the human and spiritual journey and no naive expectation that we must bring grief to closure.

The collection rightly assumes that there is no one experience of grief. Raw grief is one of the most searing emotions and we all grieve in our own unique way. While time and tears are great healers, we may think we've moved through our season of sorrow when something happens – a song, a memory, the mention of a name – and aching grief once again catches us unawares.

My hope and prayer is that this new edition, enriched and enhanced by Lynne Muir's artistry, will continue to be a source of comfort for those who are fortunate enough to open its pages.

PATTY FAWKNER SGS  
CONGREGATIONAL LEADER  
SISTERS OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN





*Christ's is the seed.  
Christ's is the harvest.  
To the barn of Christ may we be brought.*

*Christ's is the sea.  
Christ's is the fish.  
In the nets of Christ may we be caught.*

*From growth to age, from age to death,  
Your two arms, Christ, around about us.  
From death to the end, not end but regrowth,  
in the heaven of graces may we be.*

FR MICHAEL SHEEHAN



What no eye has seen,  
nor ear heard,  
nor the human heart conceived,  
what God has prepared for those who love him' —  
these things God has revealed to us  
through the Spirit,  
for the Spirit searches everything,  
even the depths of God.

1 CORINTHIANS 2: 9-10

SAMPLE

Those  
whom we love  
and lose  
are no longer  
where they were  
before  
they are now  
wherever  
we are.

ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM



God of surprises,  
help me to believe that  
on the other side of death,  
you have prepared for [ ]  
wonders that I can never imagine  
and a welcome only you can prepare.

I ask for this in faith  
through the comforting Spirit,  
the last breath of the dying Jesus  
and his first gift of Easter night.