

A Hug for an Orphan

In World War II, a soldier was on duty one Christmas morning. It had been his custom to go to church every Christmas morning with his family, but now, in service in the outlying districts of London, this was impossible.

So, with some of his soldier buddies, as dawn was breaking, he walked down the road that led to the city.

Soon, they came upon an old, gray, stone building over whose main door were carved the words *Queen Anne's Orphanage*. They decided to knock and see what kind of celebration was taking place inside.

In response to their knock, a matron came and explained that the children were orphans whose parents had been killed in the many bombings that took place in London.

The soldiers went inside just as the children were tumbling out of bed. There was no Christmas tree in the corner. There were no presents.

The soldiers moved around the room wishing the children Merry Christmas and giving them whatever gifts they had in their pockets – a stick of chewing gum, a Life Saver, a nickel, a dime, a pencil, a pocket knife, a good-luck charm.

The soldier who had gotten his buddies together noticed a little fellow alone in the corner, and the little boy looked amazingly like his nephew back home.

So, he approached him and asked, “And you, little guy, what do you want for Christmas?”

The boy replied, “Will you hold me?”

The soldier, with tears brimming in his eyes, picked up the youngster and held him very close in his arms.

What a special gift that soldier gave to the child! The truth is: You cannot wrap love in a box, but you can wrap a person in a hug. The simple act of hugging can lift a person and make him or her feel connected to someone else. When you embrace another human being, for those few moments, you let go of everything and focus on that person.

That's why it is so important – in the work we are called to do in Life Care and Century Park – to liberally give our hugs.

At Christmastime – and the year around.

– Beecher Hunter