

A Ship Sets Sail

Death is a part of life, just as is birth and an introduction of a child into this world. In Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home, we deal with dying more than most, because of our chosen profession. Our commitment is to treat the experience for the families we serve with dignity, comfort and compassion.

People, of course, have different concepts of dying. I remember reading an article by Cathy Hainer, a reporter for *USA Today*, who wrote on Dec. 6, 1999:

“I have moments when fear makes me sit up in bed at night and weep like a 3-year-old,” said Hainer about her struggle with cancer. “I’ve become afraid of the long, lonely nights. Yet at other times I feel at peace, knowing I’m in the right place, secure in my beliefs about an afterlife.”

Hainer took solace in something a friend showed her: a parable found on the body of an American Jewish soldier, Col. David Marcus, who helped establish the state of Israel. He wrote:

I am standing upon the seashore. A ship at my side spreads her white sails in the morning breeze and starts for the blue ocean. She is an object of beauty and strength, and I stand and watch her until at length she is only a ribbon of white cloud just where the sea and sky come to mingle with each other. Then someone at my side says, “There! She’s gone!”

Gone where? Gone from my sight – that is all. She is just as large in mast and hull and spar as she was when she left my side, and just as able to bear her load of living freight to the place of destination. Her diminished size is in me, not in her, and just at the moment when someone at my side says, “There! She’s gone!” there are other voices ready to take up the glad shout, “There! She comes!” And that is dying.



What a beautiful concept of dying – departure from this shore, arrival at the next.

– Beecher Hunter