

## A Turning Point for Nixon

A number of years ago, *Newsweek* magazine carried the story of the memorial service held for Hubert Humphrey, former vice president of the United States.

Hundreds of people came from all over the world to say goodbye to their old friend and colleague.

But one person who came was shunned and ignored by virtually everyone there. Nobody would look at him, much less speak to him. That person was former president Richard Nixon.

Humphrey had been the Democratic nominee for president, but lost to Nixon in the 1968 election. Diagnosed with bladder cancer, Humphrey called Nixon and invited him to his upcoming funeral, which was held on Jan. 16, 1978.

Not long before, Nixon had gone through the shame and infamy of Watergate. He was back in Washington for the first time since his resignation from the presidency.

Then a very special thing happened – perhaps the only thing that could have made a difference in the tension in the room and broken the ice.

President Jimmy Carter, who was in the White House at that time, came into the room. Before he was seated, he saw Nixon over against the wall, all by himself.

Carter went over to him, as though he was greeting a family member, stuck out his hand to the former president, and smiled broadly.

To the surprise of everyone there, the two of them embraced each other, and Carter said, “Welcome home, Mr. President! Welcome home!”



One president to another, from different parties, they understood what they had in common, what burdens they had borne in common, they were elected presidents.

Commenting on that incident, *Newsweek* asserted, “If there was a turning point in Nixon’s long ordeal in the wilderness, it was that moment and that gesture of love and compassion.”

(more)

So, you are probably thinking, what is the point of this story for us?

It is this: Those of us who work in Life Care and Century Park confront many who find themselves in a wilderness. Perhaps it is a wilderness of health problems, or emotional trials and frustrations, or finding themselves suddenly alone over the passing of a spouse or child.

They are desperate for a gesture of love and compassion.

That's our calling. That's what we specialize in.

*Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive (Colossians 3:12-13 ESV).*

– Beecher Hunter