## IN TOUCH WITH GOD - IN TOUCH WITH OTHERS

I know I was supposed to write this essay about the “most important person in my life right now,” and that it was probably meant to be about someone who is living. But, for me, the most important person in my life today is my dad even though he died two years ago in an automobile accident.

I will never forget the trip to the church for the funeral mass, riding in the limousine behind the hearse that carried my father’s coffin. I kept thinking that it just wasn't fair \_ that he had only been forty years old and hadn’t even had a chance to see us kids grow up yet (I have two younger sisters and a brother). It's not that I had been especially close to my Dad \_ not like my youngest sister. Dad and I didn't always agree on things, but I did love him, and I know he loved us all a lot. And now I felt so completely alone for some reason.

I looked out the window of the car we were riding in and watched the faces of the other people I saw walking and riding by. Some of them were smiling and looked happy. In a way, I kept feeling, “Don't they know what has happened? How can anybody be happy today? It's like, my Dad just died, and that doesn't seem to matter to the rest of the world. How can things just go on like 'normal'? They aren’t ‘normal’ anymore. My dad's dead, and things will never be the same again.”

I don't really remember the funeral mass very well. I guess I was kind of "out of it" at the time, and trying to think of how I could comfort my mom and the other kids. But one thing that the priest said then stuck in my mind. He said: “Sorrow and death don't last forever, but love does.” Without really meaning to, I guess I’ve thought about that a lot ever since. I slowly began to realise just how true that is.

It's not just that we have some good and happy memories left now about who my father was. That's true. But the most important thing to me now is that my father is more than just a bunch of nice memories. More and more, I've begun to feel \_ to believe \_ that my dad is still somehow present here and now, and that he still loves and cares about me and my family and helps to look out for us. I don't mean that he's present like a "ghost" or something personally, I don't believe in that kind of stuff. But in some way that I can't exactly explain. I do think he’s still around. And it's like the love he had and gave us while he lived keeps going on now in each of us.

In a way, I guess I feel even closer to my dad now, too, than I ever used to. I mean, I talk to him sometimes about things I would never have dared to when he was still alive. It's been pretty hard for us since dad died, especially for mom. We’re doing okay now. We try to help each other out the way I know dad would have wanted us to. But sometimes it's still hard to understand and deal with all the changes, and the emptiness.

Sometimes I ask him to help me out when I'm trying to deal with this or with another big problem, but mostly, I just talk to him inside and believing that he’s there and that he understands really helps me a lot.

It's not that I'm really "religious" or anything but I just know that my dad's still here in some way, and that it's okay for me to talk to him. I have sort of started to think about and talk to God that way more, too. I only used to "pray" to God when I was either in church or in trouble. But now I have started thinking that it must be sort of the same with God that I believe it is with my dad \_ that God is around and does care and is willing to just listen and even to help us out. I don't know if this is what you wanted me to write about, but this is honestly what I think about "the most important person in my life right now, and why.