

"I am one of God's children. This is my belief and faith; every day this awareness in me is a blessing."

-- Donald E. Williams, Jr.
(1955-2016)

No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

-- 1 John 4 (12,13)

Love always surrounded our small family of five, so it was not unusual when someone we did not know arrived, bringing even more Love into our lives. Clinton Kandle came into the sphere of the Williams Family carrying Love and an open heart.

He was truly a God-send.

Many challenges have faced our family over the last few years. My brother suffered from the debilitating effects of Multiple Sclerosis, as did my sister, who had also fallen and broke a hip. After our father's death in 2011, our mother's health deteriorated. By the time, Fr. Kandle -- then a hospice chaplain -- encountered us, we were deep into cascading crises.

His calm and calming demeanor proved to be like a lifeline in a storm for us. Our mother, who is from the Caribbean, grew up in the Anglican church. I knew that she would connect well with someone from the Episcopal tradition, as Fr. Clinton is. Without hesitation, he agreed to minister to our mother's needs. Words cannot say how much that meant to me, as I lived a thousand miles away. It was a comfort to know that he was there for her.

Our mother, Leah Keturah Pollard Williams, passed away Feb. 19, 2013. Ironically, that also happened to be the date of Fr. Kandle's ordination. Mom would have been pleased to know that her friend, now a newly ordained priest in the Episcopal church that she loved as a child, would officiate at her "going home" ceremony. Our father, a minister in the Church of God, would have also been pleased that Fr. Kandle presided over the burial.

My brother, Don, who I moved to be closer to me, passed away a year ago. I brought his remains back to Florida for internment. Fr. Clinton did not hesitate to agree to officiate at the graveside service. Donnie and Fr. Clinton had shared many moments and laughs together when my brother was in Florida. It meant a lot to me that someone whom my brother would count as a friend would help usher him "home."

Perhaps all this death and dying sounds quite grim to an outside observer.

To the contrary, I can think of no greater help to individuals and families in the depths of crisis and grief than to have the calm, open-hearted, open-handed presence of someone like Fr. Clinton nearby. I cannot say I was surprised to hear that he was seeking a way to bring that personalized way of ministering to the people.

Fr. Kandle, whom we now count among family, lives his faith. That faith is obviously rooted in Love and therefore also, in God and his Son, Jesus. Our family has been first-hand witnesses to this.

And for these gifts, we will be eternally grateful.
Because that is what Love is.

With Love,
Sincerely,
Celeste Williams & Family