

Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?

—Luke 24:32

THURSDAY, MARCH 2

One of the most painful moments of my working life was making a condolence visit to Anna, a widow in Uganda, who was dying from an AIDS-related illness. Anna knew she had just a few weeks to live and had been preparing her son, James, to take over as head of the family. Anna was investing all her hope in James, a wonderful boy, leader of his church youth group and a musician who played the lyre. Then one day James unexpectedly fell ill and quickly died. His mother was heartbroken. Who would now care for her younger children when she died?

I visited Anna soon after James's death. At that time I was working with a project assisting communities affected by HIV. We sat under the eaves of her thatched hut sheltering from the rain. We cried and prayed together.

In the midst of praying, we both had a sudden sense of our hearts burning within us – a feeling of the Spirit's presence. Other women in the community joined us in prayer. Anna still grieved, but she also felt a comfort in knowing that others would care for her orphans. She was not alone. Our deep anxiety lifted. We all had a sense that together, bound by love and mutual care, we could recover hope. *Were not our hearts burning within us?*

—Rachel Carnegie