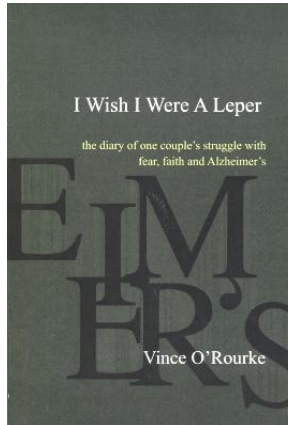


# *I Wish I Were a Leper*

*by Vince O'Rourke*



"I Wish I Were A Leper" is a book by Vince O'Rourke based on diary and journal entries which accurately record the journey he and his wife Margaret O'Rourke took with Alzheimer's disease. Because of its early onset, the disease rapidly adversely affected Margaret's quality of life.

When asked why she would ever wish to be a leper, Margaret's faith filled response was, "If I were a leper He could heal me". This is a story that grabs the reader's attention from the outset. It is a record of unconditional love, pain and suffering, hope and despair, anger and elation, as well as of a personal conflict of faith, and belief in a God of love and compassion. It speaks clearly to all who care for those suffering long term terminal diseases, especially those allied to dementia.

**The book opens:** *At precisely 1.15pm on Tuesday, October 10, 2006 my beautiful wife of 41 years, Margaret Mary O'Rourke, completed her final struggle against Alzheimer's disease and its complications. Pneumonia, often the direct cause of death in such cases, had its day. As she breathed her last, surrounded by her family, there was no blast of trumpets, no harps or angels, but a clear sense of her spirit, of her true self, departing gently from her shell of a body. It was her belief and my own that she would go to a place of peace and love. She would now rest in God's gentle presence.*

*Margaret's dying was the inevitable conclusion of a process which had begun at least eight years earlier when she was 59. It was not an ending that had ever crossed our minds in the years leading up to that. In truth I was sure that it would be my lot to die first. Selfishly I thought Margaret's gentleness would befit her in a role of nurse for me. I had not counted on God's sense of humour.*

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**Contact:** Vince O'Rourke, Carers Outlook,

50 Savilles Rd Nambour 4560.

54760642 or 0418298183

**Email:**      [vinceorourke@hotmail.com](mailto:vinceorourke@hotmail.com)



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