

Eulogy

(delivered by Michelle Goff Braden)

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Mom didn't want any tears. We told her that was a promise we couldn't keep. How could anyone who had had such a profound influence on so many lives expect not to have tears?

She had friends everywhere. In fact it became a way of life when you hung out with Mom. Everywhere we went she made a new friend or two. Whether it was at church, the neighborhood, at one of her kid's or grandchildren's events, the food kitchen or even the grocery store...no one was a stranger. And the neat thing was she treated everyone well, with the same amount of respect, whether you were 2 or 82, rich or poor, purple or green.

Mom loved to shop. Even though she couldn't get out of the house the last few months, she was still shopping. In fact, the week before she died she woke my dad with a start in the middle of the night because she was ordering rings from QVC. This was just one of her many orders. It became a regular stop for the UPS man and his QVC deliveries. I told Dad he was lucky she hadn't yet discovered eBay.

Mom also loved reading books. She sometimes had 2 or 3 books going at a time. She was especially fond of mysteries. I think she used them to fine tune her investigative skills. She was always trying to assess a situation.

She liked other books too – but mostly she just liked participating in life. She traveled, knitted, sewed, volunteered, and spent lots of time with her friends and family. And, she was always sharing one of her wonderful pearls of wisdom. There wasn't a week that went by that one of her children didn't ask her for her insight on a situation. She was a very wise woman.

Mom's faith is what helped her through this horrible ordeal. She and I took our journey into the Catholic Church together. We were both confirmed two years ago. We had a lot of conversations about our faith and what it might be like when she passed. Even though the cancer ravaged her body, due to her faith it never touched her spirit or soul. She was never bitter, and though she was angry about the disease; that anger was confined to the cancer and nowhere else.

Each time she was hospitalized I would ask her, "Is God talking to you?" And, she would say, "Yes, He's telling me that He's not ready for me yet – He says there is more for me to do here." When she entered the hospital this past week, she was admitted to a room with another patient – a woman. This woman was on the phone most of the evening talking about being on game shows, and all of the prizes she's won, and how you have to "pay to play". During this time, I asked Mom, "Is God talking to you?". She said, "Yes". I said, "What is He saying?" She said, "That she is silly". I said, "Who is silly, Mom?" She said with a grin on her face, "my neighbor". The comfort to me was that she had accepted her fate and still had a sense of humor.

Mom's sense of humor was with her even till the end. The last words anyone heard her say were early Saturday morning while she was sleeping. She said, "That is so funny. That is sooo funny." This brings great comfort to know she was enjoying herself.

God was gracious in the way he took her home. He allowed her to keep her mind all the way to the end. He allowed her to say good-bye to those she loved. But, she didn't say good-bye, she said, "I'll see you in Heaven".

So, Mom, we can't promise you **no tears**. But, what we can promise you is that you will always be in our hearts. You are dearly loved, and you are, and will forever be, deeply missed.