

Like all of you, I consider myself greatly blessed, to have known Marion and to have traveled life's journey with her.

We met over 40 years ago and upon getting to know Marion, certain details of who she was and what she liked became evident.

Marion loved her family and friends and cherished time spent with them.

She loved making her houses into a home and took great effort in taking care of them and decorating them to perfection.

Marion did not like to rush and would begin her day slowly, with her coffee on the sofa, praying and pondering her activities.

Marion took great pride in her appearance and would not leave the house until her makeup was exactly right, every hair was in place, and her outfit was appropriate for the occasion.

Although Marion did not like anyone knowing her age and dreaded the thought of getting older, she delighted in becoming a grandmother. She expressed often how her heart would melt when each of you, Natalie, Troy, Carly and Lindsay would call her "Mom-Mon."

Marion loved her Catholic faith, receiving the Sacraments, her Bible study, being a choir member, attending Eucharistic Adoration and watching ETWN. She had a particular devotion to Our Lady, St. Joseph and St. Therese, the Miraculous Medal novena and the rosary. Marion spent much time in prayer, imploring God to shower His graces upon her loved ones, as well as herself.

There is a book entitled, *Hinds Feet on High Places*, that comes to mind when I think about Marion and her life journey.

It is a story about a woman named, "Much Afraid," who is a shepherdess filled with fear and apprehension. She is invited by the Good Shepherd to the high places in the mountain, guided by her companions, Sorrow and Suffering. The Shepherd desires that Much Afraid overcome her fears and place her trust in Him. He promises to transform her to become the woman He has called her to be from all eternity. In the end, having overcome her fears, Much Afraid is giving a new name – Grace and Glory, and her companions, Sorrow and Suffering become Joy and Peace.

When I met Marion 40 years ago, she was like Much Afraid. She did not see herself as strong and wanted to depend upon others. But God saw Marion's potential and invited her to place her hope and trust in Him, and in time, she would be transformed.

I remember so well, when her husband Rich lost his job, Marion was filled with anxiety and worry, but with God's grace and the help of friends, she overcame herself, got a job and worked for many years—something she never thought possible!

When her daughter Kathy had cancer and died a year later, Marion once again, overcame her fears and grief and journeyed up the mountain with Sorrow and Suffering, as she grew in grace and trust.

With her own bout with breast cancer, as well as Rich's cancer diagnosis and subsequent death, she again said 'yes' to the Shepherd, trusting in His love and care – despite her pain and sorrowing.

If anyone told me 40 years ago that Marion would be a widow for almost 22 years and continue to live her life to the full, I would not have believed it. But God knew Marion and used all her life happenings—both the good and the difficult—to transfigure and mold her into a faith filled woman who could say, when diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, "I've lived a good life. If God is calling me now, I accept it."

Like little Much Afraid, Marion too was transformed by God and given a new name to the praise of His Glory.

Marion knew and lived her faith. Her witness to us is both a gift and a challenge! She knew that she could get through anything with God's grace. She united her sufferings to the sufferings of Jesus, knowing God would use it for her own salvation, as well as for those she loves. She knew that God loved her and looked forward to being one day with Him in heaven and reunited with Kathy and Rich.

Although it is sad for all of us who miss her dearly, we must remember Marion is with us in a different way. We can talk to her and ask her to intercede for all our intentions. She did what she could for us while she was on earth, so we can be certain she will continue. Marion would want us to strive to live our lives as she did, eyes fixed on heaven, to be reunited with her one day.

Marion was known for always asking God for a sign and she received them more times than not. Ask her to send you a sign that she is with you. Ask that it be something you will recognize, then keep your eyes open and feel her love and care, being showered upon you. Marion loves each and every one of you, in a very special and particular way. Never forget that! And please know that Marion is praying for you. Remember to pray for her!