

With Thanksgiving for the Life of  
Marjorie Thea Nelson  
19 June 1936 + 1 March 2021  
Isaiah42:5-11a; Phil2:5-11; Lk23:42-43



Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.

There's so much to remember and to be celebrated in Marj as a spouse, as a mother, as a grandmother, a family member, Marj as a friend and mentor and coach and teacher, Marj as an inspiration and encourager, offering wellbeing and life, sharing here and to the other side of the world in Cameroon, a light to the nations, we might say. There are all these things you look back on and remember and celebrate and will continue telling stories about, perhaps in the online visitation after the service and for a long time to come.

For all of those memories, I begin by recalling something in these last five years of time I've known her, when Doug talked about watching his mother change, about who she was becoming through memory loss and what the interactions were like, the altered roles of care and what it was to be there with and for her.

It could be seen as a long goodbye, the slipping away, of her not being who she had been and not being capable of what she once was. Certainly there were those challenges, and Wayne and others of you dealt with those remarkably, intimately, so caringly, with dedication, even through the difficulty.

But maybe that care also recognizes that it wasn't just a long goodbye as Marj was able to interact less and less, until it has its final ending with death. There's also more simply and regularly that relationship evolve over time and years, the changes that inevitably go with life, of not knowing Marj the same ways as when you and she were younger and at that stage of things.

But it goes also with Doug's wonder at who his mother was becoming, and striving to take that for what it was and even to consider it a gift, if I recall his sentiment.

It's embodied in Wayne's trips across the street to see Marj at her care facility, made much more difficult in these months of the pandemic. It already began as the ways to connect with Marj and spark something in her mind. Things like a flower or the birds at a feeder, an old photograph or words of a greeting card, asking about a meal or telling news or an old story, lately with those things needing to be delivered through staff or through a screen window or through a screen of an electronic device.

Some of that is the project of remembering, to re-member, finding ways to connect the members of the body together again. You wouldn't let the relationship be severed, but would re-member, re-linking with Marj in new ways and old ways, continuing to keep her with you, a love that's willing to go on loving, as the song said.

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.

As Wayne recounted when gathered for a farewell at the cremation and again yesterday, telling of a canoe trip where Marj had already pushed off from shore into the current when she was asked if she knew how to steer and replied No! Yet they made it along the trip, through rainy days and the rocky stretches, making it through rocky stretches of life, not because things are perfectly as

you wish or are easy or even because you've tried so hard and so successfully.

There will always be loss and eventually death, and with Marj there may have been more of that or longer of it than you would've wanted, may have wanted more of her, of who she had been. And there are times of disconnect, times when it wasn't very possible to connect with Marj. Again, because of the pandemic, because of the changes, because of the circumstances of life, and maybe some of you wish you would've done better, that more would've been possible.

But it's not just remembering; you also are remembered, remembered in and into the mind of Christ Jesus. When disconnection threatens and relationships are fractured or even seem severed by death, you are remembered, forever and endlessly re-membered into the body of Christ across all times and places. Maybe still more directly or personally, when memory fades and forgetfulness overwhelms, when your mind is not what it used to be, you and Marj are remembered. With all creation and for all time, Jesus remembers you.

That is the mind of Christ Jesus with you and in you.

We don't know what's to come, can't conceive in our minds even what this bigger picture is of the future into which we're invited, what it will be to be brought into God's arms and brought back together with Marj. It's more than we can know. Even as we give thanks for this life, we can't say much about what's after life. So all we can do is trust in the God who takes us by the hand and keeps us, trust the one to whom new songs arise, life flowing on in endless song above earth's lamentation, trust that for all of our prayers and pleas for remembering, that Jesus assures, "Truly I tell you, today, tomorrow, now, and forever, you will be with me in Paradise."