

A Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance For the Life of Mary Frances Bolner Valach

Greeting

Friends,

We gather here in the protective shelter of God's healing love to give thanks for the life of Mary Frances Bolner Valach.

In this place, we are free to pour out our grief, to release our anger, to face our emptiness and know that God cares.

We are conscious this evening of others who have died and of the frailty of our own existence on earth.

We come to comfort and to support one another in our common loss.

We gather to celebrate Mary's earthy life of love, to remember her gentle, kind hearted and adventurous spirit—and to mourn her absence.

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father,

Your ways are not our ways

And your thoughts are not our thoughts,

Heal our wounded hearts made heavy by our sorrow.

Intercede for us with sighs too deep for human words.

Through the veil of our tears and the silence of our emptiness,

Assure us again that ear has not heard,

Nor eye seen,

What you have prepared for those who love you;

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us hear the words of assurance from the Holy Scripture:

Psalm 139-

139 O LORD, You have searched me and known *me*.

² You know my sitting down and my rising up;

You understand my thought from afar.

³ You comprehend my path and my lying down,

And are acquainted with all my ways.

⁴ For *there is* not a word on my tongue,

But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.

⁵ You have hedged me behind and before,
And laid Your hand upon me.

⁶ *Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful for me;
It is high, I cannot *attain* it.

⁷ Where can I go from Your Spirit?
Or where can I flee from Your presence?

⁸ If I ascend into heaven, You *are* there;
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You *are there*.

⁹ *If* I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

¹⁰ Even there Your hand shall lead me,
And Your right hand shall hold me.

¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall^[a] on me,"
Even the night shall be light about me;

¹² Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You,
But the night shines as the day;
The darkness and the light *are* both alike *to You*.

¹³ For You formed my inward parts;
You covered me in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made;^[b]
Marvelous are Your works,
And *that* my soul knows very well.

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You,
When I was made in secret,
And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

¹⁶ Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.
And in Your book they all were written,
The days fashioned for me,
When *as yet there were* none of them.

¹⁷ How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!
How great is the sum of them!

¹⁸ *If* I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand;
When I awake, I am still with You.

²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my anxieties;

²⁴ And see if *there is any* wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.

A reading from First Thessalonians 4:13-18

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. ^[a]

¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Sharing from Chaplain Katharine Toledano

Words from Steve Valach

Let us commend Mary's spirit into God's loving hands:

O God, our strength and our redeemer,
Giver of life and conqueror of death,
We praise you with humble hearts.
With faith in your great mercy and wisdom,
We entrust Mary Frances Bolner Valach to your eternal care.
We praise you for your steadfast love for her
All the days of her earthly life.
We thank you for all that she was to those who
Loved her.
Receive her into the
Arms of your mercy,
Into the blessed rest
Of everlasting peace,
And into the company
Of the saints in everlasting life. Amen.

Let us close with a prayer of hope for those who loved Mary:

God of all mercies and all comfort,
In tender love and compassion,
Embrace your sorrowing servants.
Be their refuge and strength,
An ever present help in trouble.
Show them again the love of Christ
That passes all human understanding;
For by death Christ has conquered death,
And by rising Christ has opened to all of us
The gates of everlasting life.
Thanks be to you, O God.

Amen

Amazing Grace

Benediction (as needed)

The peace of God which passes all understanding,
Keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God
And of Christ Jesus our risen Savior.
And the blessing of our Heavenly Father
Be among you
And remain with you always.
Amen.