

## JohannaHart

I've known Johanna's family for many years. Leo and Ann Hart were members of St. Regis when I was pastor there. When Leo's sister Geraldine died in 1998, he and Ann told me that - in the midst of their loss - the person doing heavy work for them around the house was Johanna. She was a godsend to them. Not long after that, Johanna received her diagnosis of breast cancer and began chemotherapy treatments. When she lost her hair, she told me that she'd be glad when the treatments were done. They did come to an end, and Johanna became a cancer survivor. Little did I know that I'd connect with her many years later after she took up residence in the Cathedral Towers.

Maybe it was because surviving cancer taught her to appreciate the beauty of life, but Johanna was all about family. She kept her siblings connected. She was a real Mama Bear to her kids and a most loving grandmother. She got people together around food and parties. She loved entertainment. She loved to travel. She loved Alaska, and she loved moose. If you ever wanted to hear an opinion, you never had to go very far when Johanna was around. In fact, even if you didn't want to hear an opinion, Johanna would still give you hers. And she would ultimately do things her way. She took care of her home; she took care of other people's homes; wherever you were she made you feel at home.

Two of the scripture readings today play on this metaphor of the home. At the Last Supper, when Jesus prepared his followers for his departure, he said, "In my Father's house there are many dwelling places.... And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be." That statement is all the more poignant when you think that the adult Jesus did not have his own home. He sounds almost wistful here about the kind of home he had as a kid, and the one that lay ahead for him beyond the cross and resurrection.

St. Paul lived not only a spiritually difficult life, but a physically difficult one as well. His Second Letter to the Corinthians opens with some reflections on suffering, and then a few chapters later he compares the fragile human body to a temporary home. "Although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.... For we know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building from God, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven."

Johanna had to live in different homes, but in some ways, the home she liked the best was not yours or hers, but the great outdoors - not too different from what Jesus preferred. We pray for Johanna now that the Father will open that final home to her, the home that has many dwelling places, and give her eternal rest. As Johanna devoted her life to loving her family, serving those in need, enjoying the beauty of the earth, and sharing her beliefs and opinions, may we do the same. Together may we meet Christ one day in the dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven.

*Saturday, February 9, 2019*