

Ellen Wicht

For the past 15 years Ellen Wicht has been slowly entering a mysterious world of her own. But she will be remembered as a loving wife and mother who made good friends and set an inspiring example for all who were privileged to know her. She liked to cook; she canned food from her own garden. She sewed for her children – and not just the easy stuff. She made first communion dresses and prom dresses. She enjoyed the loving affection of two terrific men. Fred was not just her husband and the father of her children; he was her best friend, and his early death to colon cancer came as an unexpected blow to the family. Still, Ellen handled it as she handled all the adversity in her life – without complaint and with a determination to do all that she could, all that God had called her to do. Dwayne, I cannot tell you how impressed everyone has been with your loving care for Ellen. When two people take each other for better or worse, they never expect they'll get a full dose of both. You have said that Ellen would have done the same thing for you, and that is surely true. But it fell to you to care for her in the years when her Alzheimer's grew more intense. In doing so, you reminded us that Ellen was a human being, a living and responsive person, a loveable and loving friend, a woman of exceptional character, and that no disease was ever going to strip her of her dignity. We all thank you for that. The same applies to her daughters, Ellie, Gail and Margie; you heard Ellen say, "I'm the kid, and you're the mother now." Even as you endured a long, slow loss, you were still able to laugh at the silly things Ellen would do, and your love for her remained sincere and strong. We talk a lot in the Catholic Church about the right to life and the dignity of the human person, but your family demonstrated this more eloquently than any speech or treatise in the generous care you gave Ellen Wicht.

I'm sure you learned those values from her. She always went to church and had a deep devotion to the eucharist. She believed with all her heart those uplifting words of Jesus, "Whoever eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood has eternal life, and I will raise you on the last day." She believed the prophecy of Isaiah: "On this mountain the Lord of hosts will provide for all peoples. . . . The Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces. . . . Let us rejoice and be glad that God has saved us!" And like Saint Paul, who enjoyed friends, faith, and travel, and who endured his share of hardships in his own body, she could have spoken the words he wrote to the Romans: "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us." "We are children of God, joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him."

Ellen entered a mysterious world of her own, but now she enters a mysterious world of God's own, and we who believe in the resurrection of the body rejoice with her that her suffering is over, her glory awaits, and her joy is restored. In a brief life, Ellen taught us a lot about the care we need to give one another, no matter the circumstances. If we live that lesson, we will show that we too are disciples of Jesus, who suffered, died, and rose.

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