

MARTHA MOMENTS

The following are some memorable moments where Martha was quietly teaching us how to live:

Michael attended Catholic grade school and the nuns had taught strict silence as a sign of reverence. When the church changed to using multiple lay communion ministers, Mike mentioned there were so many people on the altar it was almost becoming a party. After explaining it to Martha, her response was "Well, the Eucharist is a celebration, you know."

Aunt Martha was instrumental in my growing up as we lived so close to your family from 1955-1959. Your Mom introduced me to classical music by taking me to Marcia's high school musical events; it was my first time to hear and see violins being played.

On the 500th Anniversary of Martin Luther's birth, Kenneth Untner, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Saginaw came to Trinity Lutheran Church to speak. On the ride back to Washington Woods, Martha said, "If Dad had only lived to see this day...."

Grandma always had time, patience, games, and an idea of what to do to keep us occupied, and let us not forget -- cookies! I kept her cookie pan because it is unique. It's raised star-burst pattern imprints itself on cookies, like she imprinted herself on our lives. Grandma was a practical person too, that cookie pan bears this out; it works great and I will enjoy using it to make cookies with my boys for years to come.

Back in the late '60's we were seriously working on the McComb genealogy. On the way home from the Sanilac County Court House, Dad, Marcia, Mary and Mike stopped at a one block ghost town in the thumb. One of the few things left there in the sand hills was a street sign that said, "McComb Street." It was a very tempting item to add to the genealogy. Dad said in his slow, soft tone, "Might as well leave it there. Ma would just make us bring it back."

Your Mom fed me hundreds and hundreds of nutritious meals, and cookies; and let me go on vacation with you all; and gave me a real sense of "family" in your home on Wheeler Road. I know that sometimes I drove her to distraction and she thought I was a bad influence on Mary Jean!!! However, my Mother and I were still always welcome in your home and at your table.

When Michael was in 1st or 2nd grade he had evidently done something wrong and expressed fear that God would punish him. "Martha's response was, "Our God is a loving God -- what are those nuns teaching you down there?" It was the only challenging time I recall despite being a two religion family.

From very humble beginnings about 30 miles north of Midland, Martha lived a frugal economic life, but a rich religious life that can best be described as an excellent example for anyone to follow. The world would be a much better place if there were more people like my Mom and Dad. My sisters and I were blessed to have been raised by them.

Mom never thought about what she could GET from you, but only what she could GIVE to you. Incredibly, she essentially asked Linda and I this same question within 18 hours of her passing on to eternal life. We urge all who read this to adopt her same philosophy as we seek to be good stewards of God's gifts to us.

A Month of Sundays

Who wouldn't want Martha McComb as a grandmother? Her house was full of cookies, cowboy hats and a big warm furnace to sit in front of. She wore a dress everyday except when she went out blueberry picking, and then she would put on a pair of grandpa's jeans, a shirt, a hat and head for the best blueberry patches.

Grandma always managed to fill her bucket and we always managed to eat most of ours. With the blueberries came pies, pancakes and jelly, then she would start on the peaches, strawberries, and raspberries and turn them into jams, shortcake and ice cream toppings. Then there was the garden in the back. My favorite thing was the corn, we were little and the corn was big which makes a fabulous combination. We would run up and down the rows of corn until someone would tell us to get out and stop tearing up the corn. In the fall there were pumpkins, lots of pumpkins. We would go over close to Halloween and pick out a pumpkin for carving.

Dinners were always fun, too. Grandma's specialties were scalloped potatoes and dinner rolls. The main dishes changed but you could always count on the staples. She had a big table in the dining room that could fit anyone who happened to be in town. Her door was always open and she was always ready to feed anyone who came by. We stopped by regularly on most Sundays; sometimes we were there for dinner and sometimes after. After dinner we would sit around the dining room table and play games like Yahtzee, Sorry, or Tripole. Sometimes we just sat around the living room listening to Grandpa tell stories and watching Grandma's reaction. He would tell a funny story and she would let out a puff of air and put one hand over her heart and one hand over her stomach and say something like, "Well God love him!" and laugh a little bit. Grandpa would laugh so hard he had to wipe the tears away.

Now I have a friend who always asks me why my sisters and I liked to take care of people. My response is that our mother always takes care of people. Then I'm asked why my mom likes to take care of people and I say she learned it from my Grandmother, who was always taking care of people. We watched her do it unselfishly day after day, Sunday after Sunday. A month of Sundays would not be enough to learn how to show the goodness of Martha McComb, it would take a lifetime of Sundays.

Family

Every family is a little empire, even if its population is scattered and not always on good terms. The empire's history becomes legend, even to the rebels. How we got here, how we became this group, how we lost a cousin in a war or an aunt to cancer, and how the young ones are coming on – college, marriage, revolution, running away. These are what make up the substance of conversation at state dinners, nourishing us for another year. Oh, how wonderful are families. Our very richest blessings.