

## Funeral homily for Marg McLeish

When I was growing up, I loved reading comic books. Every couple of weeks there would be a new adventure featuring superheroes like Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman. It was a real treat to the imagination to see these powerful figures using their great powers to combat evil and promote justice in the world. As a child, I knew comic books were fiction and that there were no superheroes in real life, especially the kind running around in colourful costumes and wearing a mask or a cape. As I grew up, though, I started to see that there were some real life heroes who did have some amazingly great powers which they did use for the good of others. And while they did not wear masks, some of these super heroes would wear something colourful, just to let you know they were there.

Marg McLeish was that kind of superhero. While she could not leap a tall building in a single bound like Superman and she did not carry the lasso of truth like Wonder Woman, Marg did have important superpowers. Marg liked to wear the colour red, as we have all noted. To me red signifies a big heart. And Marg's heart was superhero sized.

One of Marg's fellow teachers says "Her energy and love of children were endless. She would walk up and down the halls chatting and laughing with that one difficult child until she could calm him down so that he could feel comfortable enough to go back to class." Marg's heart was big enough that she treated everyone as a dear friend. And it did not take long to be welcomed in to her heart.

There is so much more we could be saying about how Marg was an inspiration to so many. And that is part of the tragedy we must face today. There could have been so much more. This is a life which has ended all too soon. There should have been so much more. So today we have gathered to mourn what we have lost. We also mourn what could have been. Today is a day to count all the moments you did have, and all of that unfulfilled potential, and to see them as blessings. This is a time to give thanks for the gift of what was, and also what could have been.

Such fleeting moments spent with children, family, friends and neighbours may not seem as important as the great things others have built. But even the greatest of our buildings will eventually crumble into dust. Truly every moment, no matter how fleeting, is important. Even the most simple of days matters, because God is present in every moment of every day. God is with us in the good times as well as the bad times. God is eternal, so God's memory of every moment is held safe forever. In this way even the most fleeting of moments lives

on in God. God uses each of these memories to build up this world. God is always working to redeem and heal and bless this world through our actions. In each moment God gives us choices and possibilities which can add to the good in this world. God gives us gifts, talents, which can add to the beauty of this world. Because God is present, each act of caring matters. Each act of kindness and connecting has eternal significance. Everything we do in a spirit of love adds some goodness and beauty to this world.

The good news we proclaim today is that the love Marg McLeish had for you has not ended. Her love for you lives on through God. And her love for you is a super power that you can claim for yourself.

In the book, "Tuesdays with Morrie", the author Mitch Albom shares the insights that he learned from a very close friend who was in the final stages of a terminal illness. At one point, Morrie tells him "Death ends a life, not a relationship." For each of you here, Marg has brightened your world with her presence. Her impact on your life and her love for you, is not erased by death. Your relationship, your memories, the life lessons she taught you - these all live on in you. Her love for you is still there, encouraging and appreciating everything you do. And whenever you need it, you can call upon that love to lift you up. As Saint Paul puts it, "Faith, hope and love last forever. And the greatest of these super powers is love." Today it is hard for us to say goodbye to someone we have loved, but it is also a good day to say thank you for the love we have shared with her.

We find hope in knowing that Marg's love for you lives on in God's eternal memory. It lives on to give you the courage you need in order to live a life full of love. For when our hearts are open to God's redeeming love, ordinary people can do extra ordinary things, just like the superheroes we looked up to when we were young.

For the all too short life of Marg McLeish, for the great love she shared, and the blessing she was to us all, we give thanks to God. Amen.