

Reflection

Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate

Joliet, IL

Sr. Brigid Jacobs, OSF

By: Sr. Marianne Saieg, OSF, Friday, October 24, 2025

A few years ago Brigid asked me to give a reflection for her funeral, whenever it might be. She wanted me to tell The Twig Story. I said, If you want me to tell the story please write it out for me and I will quote you. And so she did just that, and I quote her exact words as I share this story with you today.

The Twig Story Written by Brigid 9/30/99

"The story I tell is not original. I heard it many years ago, in a sermon at church. Often I tell it now when a person walks into a GA meeting for the first time. It is a simple story:

Imagine it is a windy day. Twigs fall out of trees and land on the ground. A small child comes along and picks up one of the twigs and with its little hands holds up the twig and breaks it in two-it breaks easily. But, if you take a bunch of twigs and bundle them together they will not break.

When I came to GA I was like that twig: ready to be broken. By participating in GA I became part of a bundle (fellowship). From my bundle I received the strength, the courage, the insight I needed to begin a life of recovery. I could not and I cannot do it alone. Thank you to all who are part of my bundle."

We are all part of the bundle and together we are strong. We will revisit this deeply meaningful story of Twigs and Twine as we reflect on Brigid's full and adventurous life in story-form and in Scripture.

We remember Brigid's parents, Robert and Ruth. Brigid was their only child. Through the years she gathered together many brothers and sisters and so her family grew and grew. Her relationships were her life's work. We extend our sympathy to Brigid's classmates in Community: Faith, Rose Marie, Teresa, Kathryn and Maria Bui.

As we lean into the amazing and mysterious Brigid we know how she loved meetings. How interesting that she chose the song, *Gather Us In* for the entrance today. Looks like we are now all gathered together for her meeting, and she has our undivided attention. What will we share? How can we ever summarize the life and the path of Brigid? No one person can search the essence of another. Nor can we collectively say, We understand the ways of Brigid now. So, we will now together reflect on the mystery of the person of Brigid.

Brigid had a Community within the Community. What a gift! She asked me to share her journey as a compulsive gambler. Which means she became part of GA, a 12 step recovery program. Once she found this group, she never looked back. She was "clean" for 26 years. On this journey she attended meetings weekly for 26 years. As she began to appreciate the sharing and the wonderful people on the same journey, she attended 2 meetings weekly. Remember she loved meetings!

The Scriptures she chose for her Liturgy today

hold us up, gently, yet firmly, and urge us to “stay-tuned.” The best is yet to come!

In our second reading we recall the guiding words of the Scripture:

“You have shown me the path to life...You will fill me with Joy and your Presence.” Acts 2:25

God provided Brigid a path to understanding, a path to the shared lives of others and an enormously rich interchange with people with whom she built long and lasting friendships. So, Brigid had friends some of us never knew she had. She was a member of two communities. Her Franciscan Community and her GA Community. She loved them both.

During her hospital stay I was honored to meet many of her GA friends. Of course, many of the people who visited brought chocolate, breakfast sandwiches, long John’s and so on and on. Brigid didn’t eat much but the friendships fed her like food for her Soul. She thrived on these exchanges.

One day we were talking about what brought us to Community. Brigid shared a story about a grade school magazine she read. Each week an article was dedicated to a particular Saint. She was fascinated with these holy people. She said she always wanted to be holy. She wasn’t sure what that meant but it appealed to her. Perhaps this was the beginning of her vocation walk with God and her Franciscan calling.

“What is good has been explained to you, this is what Yahweh asked of you: Only this, to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8

She wanted a globe at some point of her journey! She told me she turned the globe to South America, to Brazil, as she wanted to

always be aware of our entire Community. She wanted Brazil ever before her as she gazed at the world.

One time during our visit I asked her if she wanted to rest rather than talk so much. She said, without missing a beat: “Marianne, I am going to have an eternal rest and now I want you to stay. I want to talk, so sit down. And I did! I want to live until I die. And besides I like when you come so often because the nurses and staff see that someone cares about me. It’s good for them to know that I am cared for.”

Brigid was consistent and vocal regarding the rights and the strength of women in every level of life. Her passion for Peace and Justice and her membership with Future Church, Pax Christi and the Franciscan Federation and JPIC Subcommittee, Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation, were only a few indications of her love and Franciscan outreach to the wider world. It is no surprise then, that she chose the Gospel of Matthew telling the story of Mary Magdalene and the other Mary as they realized Jesus was not in the tomb.

I call this, the Gospel of **Drama and Discovery**. **“Suddenly there was a mighty earthquake, as the angel of the lord descended from heaven. He came to the stone, rolled it back, and sat on it. Then the angel spoke, addressing the women: ‘Do not be frightened, I know you are looking for Jesus, but he is not here. He has been raised...go quickly and tell his disciples...’” Matthew**

Brigid loved this Gospel. Why? I think because the women were in charge. Brigid was in charge until her end of her life. She wanted to keep her good mind and make her own decisions and that she did. I surely hope she meets this Angel.

Brigid had forever friends. Friends of many years and with many stories, some told and some untold. Pauline Jordon, Sisters Mary Lou Marchetti, Sue Bruno, Mary Jean, and Catherine. So many others unnamed here but forever in her heart.

Along the way, we learn that life is short, and love is long. Love lingers and lasts. Love out lives life!

Brigid was also part of our small group in the Community, our Local Chapter. One necessity for each meeting: conversation and food! We tried to include each month a delicacy, chocolate that enjoyed Brigid would enjoy, for the sake of peace!

On Sunday morning, October 19th when I was texting Brigid's friends that she had died, one of her dear friends shared this sentiment: *"I loved that crusty old lady."* Now, that's our Brigid!

These thoughts and stories are only a glimpse and an attempt to capture a snapshot of our Sister and friend, Brigid.

The GA conference was held last weekend, Brigid was unable to attend since she was in the hospital. Through a voice recording she shared the "twig" as the conference opened. Although it was only her voice that was heard, her GA friends told her she received a standing ovation. She shared this with me and said, "I never had a standing ovation in my life." It meant so much to her. She was deeply touched and her face lit up the room as she smiled.

For the life she loved and shared with all of us, I ask you to join in giving her our standing or sitting ovation for her life. I think she has better vision is better now. Amen and Alleluia!

Well done good and faithful servant. The table is ready for you, Brigid. Indulge! Savor! Make sure you are the "chair" of the heavenly banquet meetings. Save room for us. Carry on, friend. We love you, "crusty" lady!

Sr. Marianne Saieg, OSF
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