

A Tribute to Sister Mariana - from Chioma

Mariana was a remarkable woman of God—selfless, sweet, and a truly joyful soul to be around. Getting to know Mariana (whom I affectionately called Sister Mariana) felt truly orchestrated by God. During one of the most challenging periods of my life and for my entire family while we were living in Japan, our paths crossed through two wonderful family friends, Jennifer and David Goldstein. At the time, Mariana and her beloved husband were serving as missionaries in Japan.

I was admitted to the hospital for surgery and subsequently moved between hospitals and rehabilitation centres. Being in a foreign country with only my husband and our one-year-old daughter—and no other relatives nearby—made this an exceptionally difficult season. Just when we needed it most, God brought help.

Mariana was one of the guiding lights sent to us in our darkest times. She was far more than a friend to my family. She visited me in the hospital, spending hours keeping me company and chatting while she worked on her beloved silk designs. Her weekly visits transformed my hospital stay into something genuinely enjoyable. The sacrifice of her time and the boundless love she showered upon us meant the world to my family.

Even after my discharge, she continued to visit us at home, and once I recovered, my husband, daughter, and I were blessed to reciprocate those visits. I saw Mariana last when she came to see us in the UK. It was the first time my other children met her, and she left such a profound, lasting impact on their lives that they still cherish the memory of her visit.

Knowing Mariana taught me the true meaning of selflessness, love, and kindness. She had time for everyone—young and old alike, regardless of background. She loved deeply, gave generously, and poured herself out for others, especially the downtrodden. Mariana lived an exemplary Christian life, always ready to lend a helping hand. Her advice to my children still resonates with them today. Just a few days ago, my son fondly recalled what she told him during her last visit: "To be confident and always lift your head high." That is something he will never forget.

With her infectious smile, Mariana made sure everyone around her felt seen, valued, and happy. Reading about Mariana's passing on Facebook was devastating for my family and I. Yet, we take great comfort in knowing she is now in the best place possible. We will continue to pray for comfort for her beloved husband, Jim; her daughter, Beth, and her family; and her son, James, and his family.

She ran her race brilliantly and impacted countless lives in profound ways. Mariana will be missed terribly, but her remarkable legacy will live on forever.

Rest in peace, dearest friend. Rest in peace, till we meet to part no more!