

MELVA'S LAST SUPPER

By Cheryl Harward Wilcox

"Would you like to try to take the sacrament?" I asked my dying mother.

My mother lived to be 92 years old and recently passed away. She was in the hospital when the doctors decided that there was nothing more that could be done except to keep her as comfortable as possible until she passed on.

As preparations were being made to take her home, two brethren from a local ward came into the room and asked me if my mother would like the sacrament. At first I told them, "No, thank you." Mom could hardly swallow. Then I said, "On second thought, let me ask her." I leaned close to her ear and said, "There are two priesthood holders here. Would you like to try to take the sacrament?" In a faint but clear voice she answered, "Yes."

After the blessing, I picked up a piece of bread from the tray, broke off a tiny crumb, and gently placed it in her mouth. She worked on it for a bit, and I quietly apologized to the men for it taking a while. They assured me it was OK. After the second prayer, I took a small plastic cup of water and held it to her lips. She took only a

small sip, but I was surprised at how well she swallowed it.

I thanked the brethren, and they left for the next room. Mom died peacefully about an hour later.

In the days that followed, I realized what a sacred moment I had been allowed to share with my mother. The last thing she did in this life was partake of the sacrament. The last word she spoke was "Yes"—yes to receiving the sacrament, yes to offering her sacrifice of "a broken

heart and a contrite spirit" (3 Nephi 9:20), yes to taking upon herself the name of Jesus Christ and promising to always remember Him, yes to receiving His Spirit. The last things that passed through her lips were the emblems of the sacrament.

How sweet her last supper must have tasted to her! Although too weak to move or speak, how alive in Christ she must have felt! How grateful she must have felt for His redeeming and enabling power, which carried her through those final moments of her mortal journey and extended to her the hope for eternal life.

Each week as we partake of the sacrament, may we all be grateful for the opportunity we have to renew our covenants and to feel forgiveness and grace as we strive to become more like our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ. Then the bread and water can be for us, just as it must have been for my mother, "sweet above all that is sweet, . . . and pure above all that is pure" (Alma 32:42). ■

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