

## Heart of a Marine's Mother

I knew that if I were to survive missing my 19-year-old son while he left for war, the only way I could do it was by asking for support . . . asking for prayers. Not something I had ever asked for before in a grandiose way. I was the typical overextended mothering type, doing more for others before paying any attention to me and my needs.

And never would I think to reveal anything so private about me—an equally grandiose—heartache.

For the first time, I poured out my heart to family, friends, business associates and even acquaintances . . . and asked for help.



*Sent: Thursday, March 03, 2005 9:12 PM*

Our hearts are heavy, after Michael, my husband, with our daughter, Nicole, tearfully gave our farewells among a smothering of hugs to our son, Dominic. As I write this, he is probably on the plane to Kuwait, where his unit will wait for a few days for the remainder of the battalion, then helo out to Camp Fallujah in Iraq.

I know statistically the percentage of war fatalities is not much different than the statistical percentage of fatalities from car accidents, crime, etc., in the U.S.

I know that the media focuses on the fatalities.

I know Dominic is under God's protection and care and under the powerful prayer support of so many.

I 'know' the likelihood that he will return to us 'just fine.'

Yet as mother of my only son and youngest child, and speaking for Michael and Nicole, our hearts still hurt to send him off to a war zone.

Maybe it hurts so much because we know too well about the realities of war from Michael who served as a medic in Vietnam.

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As a mother, I've put off 'feeling' about this. It all finally 'hit me' after the Marines suddenly moved up their deployment a week and shortened their liberty from an expected three or four days, to only 12 hours.

Dominic clearly wanted to be in the military since he was five years old. His father and two grandfathers set the precedence with commendable military service careers. What is a mother to do?

We ask for your (continued) prayer support for him, his battalion, and the troops that serve. For their safe return. For peace. We thank all who have already given love and support.

My 'work' is cut out for me as I stay busy to help keep my mind positive about all this . . . I will write again soon.

In the meantime, peace be with you and yours. May you take an extra moment today to look at your children and loved ones with grateful loving eyes and hold them warm and close to you.

Maria



*I couldn't believe the response! I wrote back with:*

Well you touched our hearts! Thank you so very much for your love and prayer support.

And thank you for your patience in responding to you. We were overwhelmed with the responses-emotionally, most definitely yes, and also in number and size. We received almost 200 email responses, which filled 52 pages! I just finished compiling the responses and I'm sending them off by regular mail to Dominic today. I believe he will be overwhelmed as well.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. I reached out and you responded with your heart. As the responses came pouring in (many calls, too), I sat and cried as I read them . . . many wrote about:

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- *Also being a parent, relative or friend of someone also in Iraq and relating to the emotion of that*
- *Of appreciating my sharing a very personal and deep part of me and being moved by my writing*
- *Of being part of Dominic's 'virtual support team'*
- *Of gratitude for the military and the sacrifices . . .*
- *Of God and the angels protecting . . .*
- *Of love and prayers and prayer lists for Dominic, our family, and the entire situation overseas*

I don't know any other way to thank you but to say I love you. We love you. I/we do feel much better knowing how Dominic is wrapped in your love and prayers.

With Love, Maria, Michael and Nicole



The following eight months took its toll on me . . . crying to sleep at night, weight gain . . . keeping myself extremely busy . . . examining my life: "Had I been the best mother I could be?" All the while we anxiously waited for any news from Dominic . . . and the day he would come home. I was so afraid to reveal my tender heart and ask for support . . . to cope with a Marine's mother's greatest fears.

I forgot to look at the other side until the time was upon us: To celebrate this Marine's mother's answered prayers . . .



*Sent: Saturday, October 15, 2005 5:18 AM*

*Subject: Dominic is HOME!*

*Dominic just arrived—he's home, in our arms, safe and sound! . . .*

## Heart of a Marine's Mother CONTINUED



The prayers protected Dominic's unit of about 250 Marines. They suffered only one accidental injury on the deployment, despite being surrounded by fatalities in other units in their same areas during the same time.



I dedicate this story to other mothers of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines with loving prayers to embrace and protect their own and their family's tender hearts, their sons and daughters and their units, and most importantly for all the world . . .Peace.

~ MARIA CARTER

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