

### **Minister Gail Matthew's Introduction**

We have gathered here on hallowed ground to celebrate the life of our beloved friend, Maria Fraser, and to express our gratitude for her valuation, her love for our Teacher and for her kind ways.

Let us rise and honor Maria with our silent presence.

(Silence)

Thank-you.

From the moment Higher Forces first touch one, the true significance of one's life is revealed: the transformation of a play, lovingly guided by the Gods towards a divine purpose.

At the death of a student, we see their play as a whole. We see it as a miraculous destiny, guided by a higher hand, perfect. Maria's play has come to its fruition, so that she might truly say, "Lord, let thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word."

### **Eulogy: Prepared by Sonia Jaramillo, Read by Vanessa Smith**

Often we underestimate how much we mean to each other. Maria was an invisible and delicate member of the school for over 20 years. Yet her commitment to the work, to the activities of the school and to her friends was incredibly deep.

Maria was raised in England, and joined the Fellowship of Friends in Paris in 1993. She moved to Apollo a year later, leaving everything behind to come to the heart of the School. Although reserved and private, Maria touched many people with her kindness, sincerity and generosity.

When she first came to Apollo she worked in the vineyard, then in the RVW office, and often participated in various octaves at Apollo. Eventually, she developed a career in technical writing, commuting to Sacramento for work, until this became physically and mentally exhausting for her. Maria suffered from frequent migraines, which made her very sensitive to her environment. This condition intensified over the years and there were long periods when she was unable to participate in activities with students and had to isolate herself in the peace and quiet of her room.

Despite her difficulties, Maria made commitments and gave consistently. She volunteered to help a student for a couple of hours every Saturday, a task she performed faithfully for 4 years, missing only two times. Maria became a ray of sunshine for this student every Saturday, and a warm friendship developed between them.

In spite of Maria's chronic illnesses, she would help other students in silent ways and whenever she could. But her friendships were often invisible, especially as Maria began to find it difficult to socialize. Although a challenging time for her friends during this period, her friendships remained strong.

Maria loved walks in nature, swimming at Lake Francis, art, concerts, theatre and long emotional conversations. She was adventurous; hiking in the mountains, kayaking, ballroom dancing in Sacramento. She loved good quality elegant clothes, Indian food, chocolate, good movies. She was great at caring for other people's homes and animals. She had a lovely sense of humor. Her light energy and sweet essence would often shine through.

She was devoted to the School. She worked on herself until her last moments. She had quotes around her home to remind her to be present during the day. She was sincere in wanting to see herself, to understand her psychology and rise above it. She loved Sufi poetry, Rumi, Hafiz, Buddha. She valued her connection to C Influence. This gave her strength, a sense of family and of belonging.

Her message on Inner Circle Squared was 'Be kind to everything that lives'. With it was a picture of a child in essence, gently touching leaves of grass.

**Music: Corrina Craigmill and Ruth Atkinson**

**Reading: Dean Cromwell**

**Minister**

In remembering Maria, let us remember how much we mean to each other.

Let us follow Maria in small, invisible ways; a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or any small act of caring.

Let us return Maria's mortal ashes to the ground.

Urn bearer moves to the grave. Eulogist gives the urn to the urn bearer.

The earth returns to the earth as we look towards eternal life.

Urn bearer puts urn in the grave.

**Minister's Conclusion:**

Let us salute Maria's divine spark as it returns to its divine source. "Love comes from eternity, and returns into eternity". The circle of life is complete. Dear Maria, we thank thee.

Release of the doves.

Let us each bid farewell, and then withdraw to the Gazebo, there to celebrate the gift of life yet allotted to each of us.

Funeral party put rose petals into the grave. Attendees put rose petals into the grave.

**Ceremony toast:**

When we are born, we arrive into a mystery, and when we die, we leave for another.

William Blake wrote;

The Angel that presided over your birth

Said, 'Little creature, formed of Joy and Mirth,

Go love without the help of any Thing on Earth.'

Let us toast to Maria's spontaneous love, as gives her wings for the mystery to come.