

FEATURE

The bonds of brothers and sisters last through life

"The doctor couldn't get a clear picture on the mammogram," my sister Nancy told me over the telephone. "She just said there is some type of mass and they aren't sure what it is, so they're going to take another mammogram in a few days."

I tried to tell myself that everything would be fine for Nancy. It's not uncommon for many women to be called back for a second mammogram. Still, I was having some trouble dismissing the thought that both my great-grandmother and grandmother had suffered from breast cancer.

After I hung up the phone with Nancy — and between a few tears — I asked God to take care of my big sister. Like most brothers and sisters, we are different in so many ways although we are the same where it really matters. We understand on the deepest level that a sister or brother is one of the most precious gifts we receive from God.

By the end of the week Nancy had received the good news that there was nothing to worry about. But during the four days that we waited for Nancy's results, my husband Joe and I spent a lot of time talking about the special relationship we have with our sisters and brothers and how much richer our lives are because they are here.



BY EILEEN MARX

family matters

For more than 37 years Nancy and I have been blessed to share a very close and loving relationship. The night Nancy left for college 20 years ago, I cried all night. Not only would I miss her terribly, I was the one left behind with four younger brothers!

Although Nancy and I are only 14 months apart, my mother has told us that we rarely fought as kids. And except for the time that Nancy "trimmed" my hair in high school and the time I told her how much I "disliked" her college boyfriend, I can't recall any major disagreement between us.

What I do remember are the many nights Nancy and I stayed up late watching old movies together as we talked about school, our hopes, our dreams, friends and

boys! We served as each other's maids of honor when we said, "I do." And as godmothers, we said, "I will," as we promised to help raise each other's children in the faith of our church.

Thinking about my sister, I realize the importance of fostering a relationship between my own son and daughter. As parents we have a tremendous responsibility and challenge to teach our children respect and concern for one another. But as any parent with young children will tell you, this is easier said than done.

Somewhere between the grunts and groans, the bickering and the needling, the laughter and the tenderness, relationships are forming in the early years of our children's lives that will forever join their hearts as brothers and sisters. Sometimes these hearts are broken as jealousy, an unkind remark, a long-standing feud or an inability to understand each other, tear apart this special relationship. But God lets us know that although the hurt is real, it's more important to have forgiveness and peace rather than anger and discord in our families.

In many families, the bond between siblings often makes the difference as brothers and sisters help each other through some

of life's most difficult struggles. It is this compassion, love and closeness that Jesus would like us to emulate when he invites us to be brothers and sisters in Christ.

But God does not only ask us to follow this example in our immediate families. Through the Gospel of Matthew we are reminded that a homeless woman, a poor child, a hungry family, a lonely prisoner, are all our brothers and sisters. St. Mark tells us, "Whoever does the will of God is brother and sister and mother to me."

A few days after Nancy got the good news from her doctor she wrote me a note: "Thanks for worrying so much about me. I can't tell you how much it helped to have someone to share my fears with. After the initial shock and terror, I felt a kind of acceptance. There was nothing I could do to change what was or wasn't there. I would just take it one step at a time. Thankfully, this time there was only one step to take. But the love and support of family helped tremendously. I'm very fortunate to have you as my sister. God has been very good to me."

He's been very good to me too, by giving me my sister Nancy.

Marx lives in Lawrenceville, N.J., with her husband and two children.

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Releases offer treasury of pirate tale retellings

NEW YORK (CNS) — The following are home videocassette reviews from the U.S. Catholic



Conference Office for Film and Broadcasting. Each videocassette is available on VHS format. Theatrical movies on video have a USCC classification and Motion Picture Association of America rating. All reviews indicate the appropriate age group for the video audience.

Muppet Treasure Island

Daffy mix of people and puppets cavort on sand and sea as a plucky lad (Kevin Bishop) outsmarts a treasure-hungry pirate (Tim Curry) with a little help from dauntless Kermi and starry-eyed Miss Piggy. Director Brian Henson's musical take on the Robert Louis Stevenson adventure classic is goofily entertaining in sporadic, tongue-in-cheek spurts. The USCC classification is A-1 — general patronage. The MPAA rating is G — general audiences.

Treasure Island (1934)

The classic 1934 Hollywood version of the Robert Louis Stevenson adventure saga, with Wallace Berry outstanding as Long John Silver and Jackie Cooper as the stout-hearted Jim Hawkins. Directed by Victor Fleming, it is still enjoyable family fare, though youngsters may be disappointed by its black-and-white photography. The USCC classification is A-1 — general patronage. Not rated by the MPAA.

Treasure Island (1950)

The 1950 Disney version of the Robert Louis Stevenson adventure classic stars Robert Newton as a scenery-chewing Long John Silver, with little Bobby Driscoll as a suitably serious Jim Hawkins. Directed by Byron Haskin, the action gets fairly intense at times but the kids will love it. The USCC classification is A-1 — general patronage. The MPAA rating is G — general audiences.