

SOPHIE MEINHARDT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP 2012

HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD?

KELLY BYRNE
ST. JUDE

A challenge in my own life that enabled me to experience God's greatness is when my mom got diagnosed with breast cancer. This is a time in my life when I often questioned God. I often wondered why God would do this to my family and myself.

It was the summer going into second grade. It was a typical day, just like any other. That afternoon my dad called. He told my brothers and I that our neighbor was going to take us to the new Pixar film, *Cars*. We agreed and didn't ask many questions. When we got home that night I ran upstairs to tell my mom about the movie. When I walked into her room my dad told me she had breast cancer.

I didn't really know what to do so I just curled up with my mom and went to sleep. The next morning we all just sort of lounged around the house doing whatever we wanted. I really didn't know much about cancer except that my mom was going to lose all of her hair. I imagined what it would be like to have a mom with no hair, to have people stare at her and wonder what happened but my mom is strong and I knew she was going to get through it. Some things changed but for the most part we tried to maintain our daily schedule. My mom cut her hair very short so that when she started chemotherapy it wouldn't be so long. When she started to wear wigs I soon became very appreciative of all the girls who had donated their hair for women just like my mom.

That September we ran the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. We started our own team name, we made shirts and signs. Our team had so many participants. That day I realized that we weren't fighting this battle alone, and I also realized many people were also struggling with the fight

against breast cancer. We continued this for three years. While my mom was having chemo every other Friday we had people stop by and make us dinner because my mom couldn't. It was amazing, everyday there was a new face at our front door. So many people took time out of their day to make my family something to eat. There were so many positive times but there were also a lot of negative ones too. Such as my mom being too tired to do things with us or go to work, having my mom at the hospital overnight and not being able to see her. These were the few prices we had to pay for my mom to get better.

After three years my mom was finally told that the cancer was gone! We had a huge party over my grandparent's house. My grandparents were the ones that helped us the most through this journey. They were always there and had our backs. At the party my grandma wrote this poem that explained what my mom had went through. During her speech my mom was crying and so was my grandma. This was the first time I'd seen my mom cry through this whole process. I know that my mom was sometimes just being strong for my siblings and I. She was our role model, she never let us down. I always loved sleeping over my grandparent's house because my grandma always had a way of making us feel better in the worst moments. She could put a smile on anyone's face, especially my mom's. Last summer was my mom's five year anniversary. For this we walked the Susan G. Komen race again. This was a great experience because it brought back a lot of memories from when I was seven and walked it for the first time.

Even when the journey was tough we stuck together. From start to finish my family and I were a team, we had each other's backs. I learned that God gives the toughest battles to the strongest soldiers. My mom is by far the strongest "soldier" I know. She is the most courageous and outstanding person, she is my inspiration, my role model. If I could choose and take it all back I wouldn't because it made me stronger. I look back at the time when I thought God was punishing us but really he was just giving us an experience that made us all the people we are today.