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# Dancing with Satan

TRUE STORY

by Mary Ann Cincinnati

**U**ncertainty is our only guarantee each day we live. We never know what life has in store for us. We can acquire an illness, be in a car accident, or hit by a truck. Now with all these shootings, it seems there's one a day.

Our minds scrabbled with a cocktail of questions. What is this world coming to? Why is this happening? Where are the preachers with how this correlates with scripture? There is so much unfocused hatred. It's miserable that we can't feel safe anywhere, not even going to the movie theater, a concert, or an errand to Walmart.

Nonetheless, I am now middle-aged, multiple sclerosis is hammering profusely that life can terminate any minute. I'm seriously concerned now, I have children. This may sound eerie, but I ponder the



effect it will have on them. The effect multiple sclerosis will have on my entire family. Will I have the fortitude to fight each step of the way as the stages progress and worsen? My courage wanes the instance I contemplate the future. Actually, I definitely worry that their father may pass before I do. It would be positively devastating. He is the one, the foundation, knowing exactly what to do when it comes to our girls' needs. He is reliable, responsible and the one that provides for them. I am, unfortunately, physically unable to do what is necessary for me as a mother, a wife, and as a person. I can be there for emotional support, nevertheless, I'm a failure, I cannot be their rock physically. My mind remains strong nonetheless my body is invalid. Their father, being an orthopedic surgeon, bears a tremendous amount of stress. Consequently, he has family burdens compounded on top of that, not just our kids but other relatives, also.

I know all of this is such a concern these days due to my deteriorating health. February 17, 1996, it all began, on what should have been the happiest day of my life, our lives, when I gave birth to my first child. The presumptuous planned memories of motherhood would immediately halt. She was a high-risk pregnancy. This made her birth all the more special bring her to term. The fairy tale life I wanted to give her smothered in hugs, kisses, and love. When my daughter was six to nine months old, and we were on the floor playing, suddenly I could not move my leg. My left leg paralyzed. I called my husband promptly to please rush home, but it seemed he was ready to depart just as soon as he was present. Now that I deliberate about it in retrospect, I can't believe my spouse being in the medical field didn't consider I needed a doctor appointment for an evaluation. Of course, that's the downside of being married to someone interning to be a physician, they are certain everything is a figment in your head. Moving on . . .



Mary Ann Cincinnati  
with sister Joann



Mary Ann Cincinnati  
with Sidney



Consequently, the summer of 1999. My husband and I took our firstborn daughter to Dutch Wonderland in Pennsylvania when she was a toddler. Her memories are vague today, but I recalled it like yesterday. A joyful memory that would spoil due to my questionable health. Instantly the life seemed extracted straight out of me. Enormously exhausted, I remember as if it were mere minutes ago. It was an abnormal feeling beyond any experiences before. I had told my husband, his arrogant remark was, “SUCK IT UP.” He showed no sincere concern of a loving spouse, I felt tiny about an inch tall. He provided no comfort or moral support. I could never complain about anything without his reverberating remarks always something like, “You walk a day in my shoes.” I’m in agonizing pain and tortured by his offhanded comment. Oh, how that would burn right through me! Clearly, he hadn’t the slightest clue what war I was battling. He couldn’t have cared less.

Ordinarily, I’m a very active, energetic person that would walk the dog briskly every day. Highly resilient, I’d take the blows and bounce right back to give whatever another shot. I realize now that the sensation in my left foot was merely the start of a foot drop. A small introduction to what was waiting ahead of me. Several years later when I went to the gym, after a duration of time passed and I was getting off the leg machine, my legs would become lifelessly feeble. Not tiredness from a vigorous workout weak, but entirely much different. It was so wicked that I needed the aid of someone to walk me to the car. As I hadn’t the forte to leave on my own accord. Eventually going to the gym would be another activity to store away in the past.

The sunset rises every morning long before the alarm sounds to begin another trying day. The mystery remains and I still have no thoughts, suggestions or a solution



to what is wrong with my body. One day while exercising at home, vision in my left eye went blurry. From a clear focus to indistinguishable images, vague merging colors. This was indeed disconcerting that I may be losing sight. “What more could possibly go wrong?” I queried in my thoughts. Lord knows I cannot voice it verbally in this house. Noticing the same fogged vision happened when I showered as well. Additional doctor visits weren’t pacifying me. I need a direct, definitive answer. I knew to be careful about what I wished for. But I’m exhausted and frustrated living in this limbo of not knowing. Months later, a doctor of significance with a solemn expression painted on his face spewed the dreadful news, that I had multiple sclerosis. Multiple sclerosis, the words rang inside my ears, however, the brain couldn’t absorb the information, it didn’t want to. Trying hard to push those nasty words out of my head, and back into the doctor’s evil mouth. Regrettably, it was far too late, the seed

planted and the roots took hold. My life literally ceased as every emotion one can experience sank to the depths of hell at the pit of my stomach. I must regurgitate, but multiple sclerosis embedded in every fiber of my being had taken residence. I couldn’t expel the horror. “Is my life over? My emotions were a mixed bag of anxiousness, anger, disbelief, frustrated, hatred, self-pity, and unknowing what to feel. Never will I take for granted even a day or a fraction of a second. If only this could be a horrible mistake. A nightmare from which I will wake.”

After the diagnosis, however, I continued working, but my disease progressed. I attempted to carry on life as usual and enjoy my family. Faith was questionable, why would God punish me. Feeling alone, abandon and receiving no emotional support put a substantial strain on the marriage. I was angry and eventually felt hopeless. I didn’t even want to live any longer, but knew, that wouldn’t be justifiable



to the girls if I did something deplorable. Considering how it would have such a negative effect on them and their future. How dare I ponder depriving the girls of their mother when my mother expired when I was nineteen. My children are twenty-one and twenty-four years of age.

Currently, I'm in the process of writing a book 'Dancing with Satan' to share my personal journey, wanting it to inspire others out there struggling with this malicious debilitating disease to trust and have faith in God. To know they too can have a life after being identified with multiple sclerosis. The Lord was all I had to lean on during the trials and tribulations and I continue to do so now. Those of us with multiple sclerosis must represent our color *orange* showing integrity, strength, and endurance. We don't merely survive each day, we live! That is what the color orange represents to me and to the world. I'm showing this unforgiving multiple sclerosis whose the boss. You can also. Stand up with me and demonstrate to

every disease crippling us that one person can cause change, bring progress toward a cure and eradicate it from existence as we have poliomyelitis (AKA polio), smallpox, and other plights!

I felt nothing, feeling nothing made me feel better. I lost interest in doing anything, had no motivation. I had forsaken interest in the living period. Then the girls took my thoughts and I finally started leaning on God after dealing with this debilitating disease for so long. They depended on me even if I wasn't one-hundred percent there. It was ruining my life, devastated contemplating losing this battle. If I can't win the battles I can't possibly win the war. I must muster up the courage if not for myself from this depressive state but for my family. Consequently, I wasn't giving in to multiple sclerosis. My story won't end here if I have any say in the matter by God's saving grace.