



Catalina Maria Saldaña

September 8, 1965 - March 13, 2016

Catalina Maria Saldaña, age 50, passed away Sunday, March 13, 2016 surrounded by loved ones in her hometown of St. Helena after an 18 year battle with cancer. She was born September 8, 1965 in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico to Jose Guadalupe and Amelia (De Luna) Saldaña. From the young age of 12, while studying at the Catholic Parochial School in St. Helena, Catalina began teaching religious education to the children of the community. During this time, however, many health issues began to arise. After graduating from Justin Sienna High School, Catalina continued her education at the California State University, Sacramento where she obtained a Bachelors degree as well as her teaching credentials. She was the first in her family to attend college, paving the way for later youth. As a teacher, she influenced the lives of so many students. During her 12 years teaching at Westwood Elementary (now known as Napa Valley Language Academy), she was one of only two bilingual teachers in the district. Catalina taught bilingual kindergarten for five years and second grade immersion classes for seven years. These were the first immersion classes ever taught in the district, really introducing bilingual immersion classes to the Napa Valley. During her time here, Catalina was first diagnosed with cancer. Beating it once, she was in remission for seven years. When the cancer returned, Catalina was unable to continue working in the classroom, but she never let being ill limit her. She began working from home, translating written material for the St. Helena school district. Her passion for teaching provided her with the strength to continue sharing her gift. As her cancer returned for a third time, Catalina became bedridden and focused more on her relationship with God. At this time she became very active within the Hispanic Catholic community of the St. John the Baptist Parish in Napa. She was a part of many prayer groups and introduced new resources to the church, which helped strengthen the foundation of faith for many. During her many years with this disease, Catalina faced it all with bravery and survived by the love of her 16-year-old daughter, Jacqueline Saldaña-Pimentel. With the support of her parents and siblings, Jose Guadalupe Saldaña Jr, Manuel Saldaña, and Teresa Garcia she was able to live her life and share her values with her daughter, 10 nieces and nephews, and one great-nephew. The impact she created will last a lifetime and she will be remembered and loved always.

Services for Catalina Saldaña are as follows: Sunday 3/20/2016; viewing at 4pm followed by a rosary at 5pm at St. Helena Catholic Church. A funeral Mass will be held at St. Helena Catholic Church on Monday, March 21, 2016 at 11:00am. Immediately after, her burial will be at Holy Cross Cemetery, 2121 Spring St, St. Helena. A reception celebrating her life will proceed at the St. Helena Catholic School Hall at 1255 Oak Ave, St. Helena. Catalina's family would like to thank everyone for their love and support.

Cemetery

Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery

2121 Spring St

St Helena, CA, 94574

Events

MAR **Rosary** 05:00PM - 06:00PM

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St. Helena Catholic Church

1340 Tainter St, St. Helena, CA, US

MAR **Mass** 11:00AM - 12:00PM

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St. Helena Catholic Church

1340 Tainter St, St. Helena, CA, US

Comments



“ Janette Barrera lit a candle in memory of Catalina Maria Saldaña



Janette Barrera - March 24, 2016 at 06:00 PM



“ Catalina and I went to high school together at Justin. Years later we reconnected as we both had children in the NICU at Queen Of The Valley Hospital. She stood for hours, days, weeks watching over her precious daughter. My thoughts and prayers go out to all of her family, especially her beautiful daughter. May she rest in a peace.
Theresa Goodwin Hill

Theresa Goodwin Hill - March 20, 2016 at 09:23 AM



“ Our son Reuben was in one of Miss Saldaña's first classes at Westwood, and I remember she came to dinner at our house one evening. What a delight!. Thanks to his early start in Spanish with her, he was able to go to Bolivia for a year of public service working with street boys in La Páz. She will always be remembered very fondly at our house, and our hearts go out to all of her friends and family. A lovely woman.

Evelyn Zlomke - March 19, 2016 at 05:01 PM



“ I attended Justin-Siena with Catalina, and remember her as always being so kind to everyone and always with a beautiful smile. She seems to have made a real and positive difference in many lives. Love to her family.

Allison Ratzlaff - March 19, 2016 at 01:24 AM



“ Sweet girl, rest now and put on your angel wings. I will always remember your quiet strength.

