

B7H Thurs Sept 23 - 2004

## Grace Virak Florea, 73

Grace Virak Florea was born June 19, 1931 to Carl and Beatrice Virak in Bonners Ferry, Idaho. Grace's life was a gift from God



from the moment of birth. After contracting a virulent respiratory condition as an infant, she was sent home from the hospital, given little hope of survival.

Hoping for a miracle, her parents wrapped her in warm mustard packs and prayed for their little girl to live. She did; and from that moment on, God continued to use Grace to touch the lives of the people around her as she lived her life as an expression of her name.

Grace grew up in Bonners Ferry where, shortly after graduating from high school, she married Bill Florea on Feb. 18, 1950. Grace and Bill had three children while living in Bonners Ferry: Brenda, Carl and Cheryl (Cherie). Shortly thereafter, they moved to Washington state where they spent the next 30 years before moving back to Bonners Ferry in 1988, then to Leavenworth, Wash. in 1999, to be closer to immediate family. Grace's life revolved around her family, friends and church.

She loved flowers, playing games with her family, cooking, sewing and music. For many years, Grace taught Sunday school and vacation Bible school at the Lutheran churches they attended, sang in the choir, sat on numerous committees and served quietly in the background taking care of needs that came to her attention.

Grace had deep-set blue eyes that sparkled with delight at her family's exploits. Her joy in life was most clearly shown through her open-mouthed smile and, to the amusement of her family, uncontrollable laughter. She was a loving wife to Bill throughout their 54 years of marriage; his constant, steady companion through the ups and downs of life. She cared for him in a way that mirrored her care of others, selflessly and devotedly.

Grace was the honey that glued the home together in a family life she led with her love, tenderness and wisdom. Many a long night she sat beside her children "tucking them in" to bed and listening as they wrestled their way through growing pains, childhood adventures and, ultimately, as they struggled to find life's meaning.

It is through Grace's loving example that both her husband and children know the unconditional love and acceptance of their heavenly Father. Her name was Grace not only because her parents named her so, but most certainly because her heavenly Father created her so.

Though Alzheimer's ultimately diminished her mental and physical capacities over the last few years, it did not diminish her heart or spirit. For the last two years Grace was tenderly cared for by Cashmere Convalescent Center, where she continued her life of loving in giving smiles and kisses to staff and residents. Even in her final hours, she responded to the stories, prayers, hymns, laughter and love of her family. At 10:15 on Thursday night, surrounded by her children and husband, Grace left this world as she lived in it: surrounded by the love of her family, with dignity and peace,

gently resting in the arms of her loving God.

Grace was preceded in death by her parents, sister and three brothers. Her legacy of love continues to flourish through those she influenced most: her husband, Bill, who enjoys driving a school bus in Leavenworth, Wash.; daughters, Brenda Lee Grosvenor and husband, Reed, of Auburn, Wash., Cheryl Dawn Vawter and husband, Steve, of Spokane, Wash.; son, Carl Jean Florea and wife, Debbie, of Leavenworth, Wash.; and eight grandchildren who will forever want just one more of grandma's cinnamon rolls, Ric, Greg, Nathan, Kharece, Micah, Jessica, Jordan and Aaron.

Memorial services are scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 25, 2 p.m. at Trinity Lutheran Church in Bonners Ferry, Idaho and Sunday, Sept. 26, 3 p.m. at Faith Lutheran Church in Leavenworth, Wash. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorial gifts may be made to Upper Valley M.E.N.D. (Meeting Each Need with Dignity), P.O. Box 772, Leavenworth, WA, 98826, a non-profit Christian service organization for which Grace's son, Carl, was a founding board member as well as serving as the current director.