



Sandra Maxine Gonzalez

MAY 11, 1943 - AUG 12, 2021



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Sandra (Sandy) Maxine Gonzalez (Valdez) born May 11, 1943 (78 yoa) to Raul and Grace Valdez in Santa Barbara, CA. Our Mom died after an extensive battle with vascular dementia on August 12, 2021. Our loving and faithful Dad, Bob, took tender care of our Mom during her 10 year battle. Our Mom's final eight months of life were spent at the home of our youngest sister, Dina and her husband, Ben Mawson in Elk Grove, CA. In the Mawson home, our family would gather over days, weeks and months to love, care and support Mom. The presence of Our Lord Jesus, was evident as we often would pray and meet in person or have phone calls making difficult decisions about Mom's care. We are grateful to Jesus for the grace to walk alongside of Mom during this part of her final time on this Earth. We look forward to the day we will see her again in the presence of Our Father God, His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Mom grew up in Santa Barbara for the first six years of her life. Santa Barbara would hold a special place in Mom's heart throughout her life, and later, as well as in Mom daughters lives. Mom would come to have three siblings in her family: Rita, Carmelita and Raul Jr. As Mom's Dad, Raul was the only breadwinner in the family and found work in San Francisco. Mom's parents and her siblings moved to San Francisco around 1949. The family was able to take vacations in Santa Barbara often going to the pier and visiting with extended family.

Mom attended Franklin elementary school and so did her future husband, Bob, but they didn't know each other at the time. In junior high, Mom met her best friend, Kitty and they would remain best friends throughout Mom's life. At the end of Mom's life, she would still call Kitty when she was in distress. Mom attended Mission High School, where she would meet her future husband and love, Bob.

Mom and Dad married in Carson City, Nevada on April 17, 1961. It was important to Raul that his daughter get married in the church, so on May 20, 1961 they were married in St. Anthony's church



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in San Francisco. Mom and Dad would quickly start their family: Elaine, Renee and Dina.

God was important to Mom which would be evident up until her death. Mom and Dad had all their girls baptized in the Catholic church. It was important in raising their family that their daughters know and believe in God. Mom and Dad sent all three of the girls to Catholic school from first through twelfth grade; which was an incredible financial sacrifice. Mom was active in PTA as her daughters were in elementary school. Mom would often volunteer for activities at their school.

Mom was a homemaker until Dina was about 5 years old, at which time she went to work at See's Candy. Mom started on the assembly line checking candy. After some years, she would apply to the shipping department and become the first woman to work in the shipping department. She learned to drive a fork lift and pull candy orders. Mom gave 36 years of her working life to the company. To this day our family and friends enjoy See's Candy. Mom would make many long time friends from her time at See's Candy. Mom was a loyal and faithful friend. Mom could just about talk to anyone and make a friend of a total stranger. Mom could talk your ear off.

As a young woman, Mom enjoyed playing softball and bowling in a league. Anyone who knows Mom, knows her favorite activity of all time is to shop. Mom could shop: shoes, anything with hearts, watches, trinkets and Winnie the Pooh. Mom could have her own shoe store with the number she owned. Mom was clear with Dad a little later in their marriage that jewelry was a must for birthdays, anniversaries, or just because. Dad did a great job showering her with all things that sparkled and were gold. Mom didn't miss an opportunity to wear her gifts.

Mom and Dad attended their daughter's sports games whether it be school sports or city league soccer games and tournaments from elementary through high school. During the girls elementary education, the Dominican Sisters were some of the teachers at Immaculate Conception in San Francisco. Mom and Dad would invite the Dominican Sisters over for dinner from time to time and one of Mom's go to meals was enchiladas, Spanish rice and beans. Mom could also make some delicious homemade flour tortillas right off the stove with melted butter were the best. On those rare occasions, Mom made crispy bunuelos (or elephant ears).

Mom would share her love of Santa Barbara with Dad and their daughters where most summers were spent in the quaint town where evenings were warm and chirping crickets were abound.



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Family dinner time was a regular and important part of gathering to share about our day. In the kitchen, Mom honed her skills cooking most dishes on high and often with little attention to the food on the stove top; therefore, dinner sometimes came out a little burnt.

After the girls went on to work and college, Mom and Dad enjoyed the opportunity to travel numerous places: Mexico, England, cruises and bus trips to some of our nation's national parks. Mom seemed to be willing to go just about anywhere Dad wanted to take her.

Mom was ecstatic when her grandchildren arrived: Jacob, Megan and Katie. Mom's grandchildren brought an expansion in her heart to show her love. Not to mention the opportunity to fuel the fires of hitting shopping malls for these long awaited precious ones. There was more than one conversation with Mom requesting her to keep the gifts to a minimum. Mom had a hard time understanding it, but she complied, well at least some of the time. As with most grandparents thought process, they could buy what they want for their grandchildren. It was her love language. Jacob, Megan and Katie knew how much their Nani loved them she told them regularly and they could feel her love for them.

Things began to slow down looking back over the last 10 years. Mom's lack of engagement in conversations, the increased anxiety, the withdraw and eventually she was diagnosed with vascular dementia. As time progressed, Mom grew more and more dependent on her faithful husband, Bob. Travel was a bit more difficult, but she did it for years leaving the comfort of their home. Mom had a tremendous fear of being put into a nursing home in her final years of life. Dad took great care of her for the first nine years in their home with no help until about the ninth year. The last eight months Mom and Dad moved into Dina and Ben's home. In those months, the disease took Mom's brain to the point where she could not intelligibly communicate or could she understand us. However, one of the greatest gifts that was seen throughout her illness were her times of praying. Mom wanted to pray when her family asked and often times she would pray when no one was around her, but we could watch her from a distance. Through the love, generosity and compassion of Dina and Ben, Mom never had to go into a nursing home. In the Mawson home, Mom was loved, tenderly cared for by her entire family. The love, prayer, intentional thought, on how to best care for her was a family priority.

Our family is very grateful for the help, care and God send of Mom's caregivers: Berendeta Liku Rabaka, Adi Gakula Niumataiwalu, Frances Qaram and Vilimaina Rakaseta.



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Mom leaves her husband, Bob, their three daughters: Elaine, Renee and Dina along with her favorite son-in-law, Ben and her three grandchildren: Jacob, Megan and Katie. Mom also leaves her sisters Rita Costello and Carmelita Valdez. Mom is preceded in death by her parents, Raul and Grace Valdez, and her brother, Raul Jr.

Due to the increase in the virus, our family has decided not to have funeral services at this time. In months to come our family will decide when we will have a celebration of life for our Mom.

In lieu of flowers our family asks that donations be made in our Mom's name to the Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose attention: Congregational Prioress Sister Cecilia Canales @ msjdominicans.org; 43326 Mission Circle | Fremont, CA 94539-5898



Tribute Wall

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Paula Coxe posted:

Keeping the entire family in my thoughts and prayers!! What a beautiful and loving tribute to your mom. Sending love and hugs, Paula, Dan and family

September 7 at 12:56 PM



Maureen lit a candle in honor of Sandra.

Bob, Dina, Renee, Elaine and family - My thoughts and prayers go out to you all at this time. I think of your (wife) Mom so fondly as such a giving, generous, loving person who often was a second mom to me! Memories of the home made flour tortillas she would make as a snack after high school have forever been the standard to which I judge all tortillas, and I always think of her when I see the See's Candy logo or box! I still hear her talking to the puppies Oso and Pito.....so many memories. Love to you all at this difficult time. I know she has found peace with the Lord. Maureen (Foley) Ferreira and family



August 29 at 8:23 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Sandra by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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