

## Presbyterian Women Women of Faith Awards for 2011 Cathleen Ritzo

Cathy was born in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, had a “typical childhood,” and entered California State University to study speech communication and have as much fun partying as any other young coed. There she met John. After graduation, the college sweethearts married and began a 25-year-long spiritual journey in the footsteps of Jesus, whom they celebrated as their savior. Cathy has continued on this journey alone, after John suddenly died of a brain tumor three years ago as she shepherded their three sons along their Christian path. Much of the Ritzo journey occurred within the Bayside family which they joined in 1985. Everyone was drawn by Cathy’s warm and serene approach to all of her volunteer work, and then inspired by her quiet strength in dealing with the tragedy of loss and the responsibility of raising her sons alone. She continues to rely on God’s grace, joyful for His blessing and grateful that He has given her the talents, will, and faith to continue on her Christian course.

This course is filled with both learning and service, from teaching lessons and music to pre-schoolers in Sunday School and Vacation Bible School for decades, to mission trips, to joining in the Living Nativity at Christmas, to expanding her knowledge and refreshing her spirit in adult Bible Studies, to creating a prayer board of those deployed in military service as well as performing all those supportive duties that ensure the health of a Christian community.

Bayside women are particularly grateful to Cathy for her work with PWC, has awarded her a life-time membership, and is proud to select her as our “Woman of Faith” award She has served as moderator for two circles, Vice Moderator for PWC for 4 years, Moderator for 2 years and Spiritual Nurture Chair for over 10 years. In this capacity, she has offered devotions are so relevant, down-to-earth and yet uplifting that they are worthy of publication. They do appear in the PW and church monthly newsletter. Cathy tunes in to those speakers on the daily broadcast of “Focus on the Family” who speak freely about both the good and the bad in God’s world even as their celebrate His grace.. Cathy does the same as a role model for PWC.

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