

Marylou's Baccalaureate

by Matt DeVirgiliis

Marylou Fisk sat in the back of her Senior English class at Saint Thomas High School. She passed notes — Marylou to Betsy, Betsy to Beth, Beth to Jenn.

Two weeks until graduation and the gang was still together. Just yesterday, they were sharing zit remedies, then tampons, and then kissing advice. From Baptism to First Communion, to Confirmation, and then Baccalaureate Mass, they'd done and seen it all. Never judged and never torn apart. They were as close as friends could be.

In between ketchup-covered fries, a Quarter Pounder, and a vanilla shake, catty comments, and lots of laughs, Marylou slipped in her announcement, a grenade in a rose garden. "I'm pregnant," she said.

Marylou stood at her Baccalaureate Mass, crammed in the back of Saint Thomas's Church with the parents who had arrived late. You can attend mass, Father Cuthbert — the principal — told her. But you can't sit with your class. Betsy, Beth, and Jenn each had planned graduation parties. Marylou still hadn't received her invitations. The three girls sat in their pew that day, chatting with each other as if they were whole, missing no pieces. Even Marylou's parents stayed home, ashamed to be seen in church with their sinner. "At least we have each other," she said as she patted her barely visible bump.

