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Francesca ~ p. 1

Amber S. Gell

Words cannot begin to express the heartfelt sorrow we share for the loss of  
Francesca Luciana Martino.

Francesca was truly an extraordinary person, who touched the lives of so many,  
in more ways than anyone could have imagined.

She was a daughter, a sister, a lover, a friend... The shoulder we leaned on,  
The ear we cried to, the smiling face that was always there to greet us.  
She was an inspiration to us all!

I had the pleasure... nay, the privilege... the honor... of having her as my BEST friend.  
One of the things I always admired about Francesca was her uncanny ability  
to make the best of any situation.

Her positive attitude was enough to take her wherever she dreamed.

And wow, did she know how to dream big!

Ever since kindergarten, Francesca wanted to be an astronaut...

And she was going to get there too!

Someday in the not-so-distant future, we were both supposed to be up there...

So I could be handing over command of the spacecraft to her...

Opening that hatch to the big Francesca smile & enormous hug.

We... were supposed to be there together...

We shared that dream, and our love for space, among other things...  
which only brought us closer over the years.

Francesca was the little sister I always wished I had.

She was something to each of us, that we had always longed for...

Something, that without her, our lives were missing:

... strength, courage, persistence, dedication...

... honor, confidence, focus, ambition...

... intellect, adventure, spontaneity, love... & just plain old fun!

She did more, in 23 years, than most people do in an entire lifetime!

She lived each day to the fullest & didn't have any regrets.

... Even last Monday ...

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From my perspective, in All the years & everything I've known about Francesca,  
Monday was just another AMAZING day...

She woke up, next to her loving boyfriend...

And she was headed into work at NASA, going to her dream job...

And she got to ride her motorcycle, which she absolutely loved.

Francesca was always so incredibly happy when she got to ride her bike.

So I'm sure that Morning was no different.

It is extremely unfortunate that we lost someone, so remarkable, so soon in life.

But I'm Thankful that she got to spend her last day doing exactly what she loved.

She really did live her life to the fullest, and pushed hard right up until the end.

It's just that none of us expected the end to be so soon... and so sudden...

Francesca was selfless, she worried & cared, so much, for Everyone around her;

Her Family, Her Friends...

The one thing she didn't want to do was to disappoint us... to let us down...

That would make her sad... and, well, Francesca without that Big, Radiating smile of hers...

Well, that just isn't right!

She Never let us down.

She Never Disappointed us.

She Never Disappointed Me, or anyone... Anyone at All...

I am SO PROUD of her!

So unbelievably proud to have known her, to have gotten to be a part of the

"Francesca Experience"...

I'm completely honored, like everyone here, to have her as a part of our lives!

Some have only known Francesca a short while, while others have known her for years, or an entire lifetime...

Regardless of the amount of time we got to spend with her, or how much more time we should have had left with her...

The Importance is, that we had her in our lives.

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Everyone she met, in some way, shape, or form... she changed their lives...

& she changed them for the better!

She had a smile that could light up a room, even on a dark rainy day.

She pushed harder, she fought longer, she dreamed bigger.

She made us desire something more...

she reminded us what we are capable of... if we keep trying & never give up.

She encouraged us to aim high & be the best that we could be!

She would want us to find what it is we love & do it!

Francesca welcomed us all into her life & would want us to treat others the same way.

She had an uncanny ability to make everyday extraordinary.

Mr. & Mrs. Martino (Richard & Cecilia), Thank-you for giving life to such an incredible being.

... And for shaping Francesca into the truly remarkable woman that she was.

We mourn today, not for her loss... but for our loss...

We long for all those 'tomorrows' that should have been.

Those future plans, we were supposed to share...

So the first thing we need to learn & to take from Francesca is,  
we need to be a little more selfless...

She wouldn't want us mourning her death...

She would want us celebrating her life!

She'd want us smiling & laughing... the only tears allowed would be tears of joy.

She'd want us reminiscing about our favorite 'Francesca Moments' &  
telling highly inappropriate jokes.

She'd want us to laugh so hard that our face hurt & our abs were sore.

She'd want us talking a mile a minute about every taboo subject...

Hugging our friends... & sharing a smile with EVERYONE we meet!

She'd want us being happy, emotional, and affectionate...

... To just LIVE ...

... Without holding back...

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To put it simply, Francesca is Unforgettable.

There will never be a day that she doesn't cross your mind...

& that's exactly how it's supposed to be!

She's up there... watching over us...

So Every time something happens, that you know she'd appreciate,

Go ahead and let her know.

Laugh Louder, Love Longer, & Always SMILE!!!

We all know she thought life was too short for Frowns!

On behalf of Francesca, I want to personally Thank you ALL for being

Here today... it Really Means a lot to me, Carl, Ally, & the Family.

And as you leave, go in PEACE...

Knowing that the Space Program...and EACH of us, now has a guardian angel!

Francesca, we Love you!!!