

She worries.

*“Lord, thou are hard on mothers,
we suffer in their (children's) comings and their goings
And tho' I grudge them not, I weary, weary
of the long sorrow-and yet I have my joy.”*

-From, *The Mother*, by Patrick Pearce

The quote above is from the perspective of an Irish mother. Perhaps every mother. It refers to a mother's children, who bring their mothers both sorrow and joy. It could also apply to the children of Irish mothers. Perhaps any child of a mother who loves and cares. Mothers can make us weary, weary, but they bring us so much joy.

Pearce's quote certainly applies to a particular, very special, Irish mother. My mom. Her five children have certainly caused her to be weary, weary (five children in 13 years!) yet have brought her much joy.

So on this Mother's day, let me tell you about my mom.

My mom worries. She's worried about me. She's worried about you. She's worried when you haven't called lately, or responded to her text within minutes. She worries when you're on the road; she is sure you have been in an accident. She worries, particularly in my case, that you don't go to church.

My mom prays. All the time. About everything. In the words of Aretha Franklin: *“the moment (she) wakes up, before (she) puts on her makeup, (she) says a little prayer for you.”*

My mom remembers. She remembers 12-year old me telling her that I was her *“bridge over troubled waters”* in 1970 when the iconic Simon & Garfunkel song debuted. But she also remembers when third grade me lied to her about a minor infraction. She remembers every nice thing you have ever said and any kindness shown. But she also remembers every time you disappointed her, let her down, or hurt her feelings. Every single time. And if you've forgotten, she'll remind you.

My mom has an opinion. The television show *“Blue Bloods”* is the best show in the history of television. Her generation had the best music and the best movies. John Kennedy and Ronald Reagan are the two best presidents of all time. Do not question or try to change these hard-earned opinions. She is right, you are wrong, and that's that. If you do not agree, there is something wrong with you. She will make that clear. She will not change her opinion and does not back down.

My mom cares about her appearance. My mom has always been the prettiest girl in the room, and she works to keep it that way. She does her hair and her nails, always dresses with style and will not be allowed to be seen without her hair and makeup done.

My mom cleans. Everything, every day. She dusts pages in the books on the shelf. That's correct, she takes every book off the bookshelf, opens them, and dusts the pages. She takes all the pictures off the wall on a regular basis, wipes the walls down, and cleans the frames. She washes the recyclable waste before she puts it in the bag-lined container which is also cleaned every time it is emptied. She cleans the trash cans before they go to the curb.

My mom is a traditional Irish Catholic. Heaven, Hell, Purgatory (God's waiting room) and Limbo (don't ask) are all real. There is a Judgement Day; God is watching. It always storms at 3:00 in the afternoon on Good Friday every where on earth. Miracles happen every day, (i.e., lawn guy volunteers to move heavy couch so she can clean behind it = miracle). The roof of her house is green so the Irish folks in heaven can look down and know she's one of them.

My mom has her family's back. Agatha Christie says it best: *"a mother's love for her child is like nothing else in the world. It knows no law, no pity, it dares all things and crushed down remorselessly all that stands in its path."* My mom would walk thru hell in a gasoline suit to help her husband, her kids, or her grandkids.

My mom is funny. Her impressions of her children are hilarious. She can tell a story on her husband (my dad) or her mom (my grandmother) that will take you back in time and make you laugh out loud. Her wit is sharp and spot-on.

My mom doesn't care how much money you make or what you do for a living. Although all five of her children are successful she would not care if they were still working at McDonald's or bagging groceries. In fact, she might prefer it. She does not care how much money you make, your job title, where you went to school, the car you drive, the size of your house or your nice jewelry. She just wants you to be a good person.

My mom doesn't like change. One example. My mom keeps appliances that no longer work. Recently I tried to dispose of two, big, old-school speakers that are no longer wired, and a dust buster that no longer vacuums. She prevented me because she 'liked' them. She prefers that everything stay the same. She wishes that she still lived in the little house on 6039 Cascade drive when all of her children were still little kids.

My mom is perceptive. She somehow knows when one of her children is troubled. She is aware if they are in a good mood, in a bad mood, having a good day, or a bad day. Even if she hasn't talked to them in a while. And she knows why.

My mom has a doghouse. Say the wrong thing, forget to call, say something bad about her husband or one of her kids or grandkids and you can enter my mom's doghouse. And my mom's doghouse is like Hotel California, *"you can check in any time you like but you can never leave."*

There has never been another woman like my mom.

Loves one man. An absolute rock-solid belief in the Catholic church. Fiercely protective of her family. The hardest worker I have ever known. Street smart. Never backs down. Raised five children of her own, then helped raise seventeen grandchildren, and four great grandchildren. Worked a job to help financially support her family while keeping a spotless home and managing a seven person household. Never forgot to send a card to a relative or friend on their birthday. Always sent a ‘Thank You’ note for a kindness. Never missed church on Sunday, never ate meat on Friday and will never stop reminding her kids that they need to go to church. She will tell you very clearly if you get “too full of yourself” but she will console you, and prop you up, when things get tough. She will drive you nuts. Mostly, she just loves you.

Still, my mom worries. She’s not sure if her children and grandchildren love her. She’s not sure if the house is clean enough. She feels she has failed because her children, for the most part, are not practicing Catholics. So, she’s not sure if God is pleased with her.

However, I’m sure. I’m absolutely certain her children, her grandchildren and her great grandchildren love her. I’m absolutely certain her house is clean enough! And I’m absolutely certain that if my mom can’t please God, then God can’t be pleased.

So, Mom, don’t worry. Because ultimately, in the case you are right about God and a Judgement Day, I’m confident that you will persuade God to get your entire family into heaven. Even your oldest son who does not go to church.

Because, Mom, all this time, you are the one who is the “*bridge over troubled waters.*” For me, and for all of us. And perhaps paradise is that little house on Cascade drive!

I love you Mom.

Happy Mother’s Day!

That’s all I’m sayin’

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