

November 20, 2012

Dear Family and Friends,

On November 3rd we received a phone call that my mom would soon pass into the arms of Jesus. Within three hours I was on a plane headed to Washington DC to be with my mom. I missed her passing by just a few hours and met my sister and one of my brothers at the nursing facility where she had lived for the final seven weeks of her life. She had suffered with dementia but in the end she contracted a bacteria and deteriorated very quickly. While we had been living with the effects of her illness and watched her slipping away from us for the last several years, the end still seemed to come very quickly. Lisa and the girls drove to Washington DC to meet me and help with the funeral arrangements. The service was delayed by a week because one of my brothers was in Nepal at the time and we had to wait for his arrival. My mother was an amazing woman who loved her family and served others selflessly. I am honored to be her son. I am including a part of the eulogy that my sister read at her funeral so that you understand why.

Patricia Barnard Alsop

March 17, 1926-November 3, 2012

Eulogy delivered at her funeral Mass at St. Ann's Catholic Church, Washington, D.C.

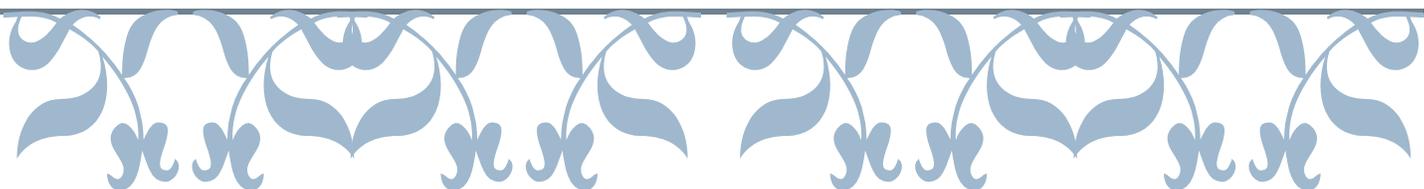
by Elizabeth Winthrop

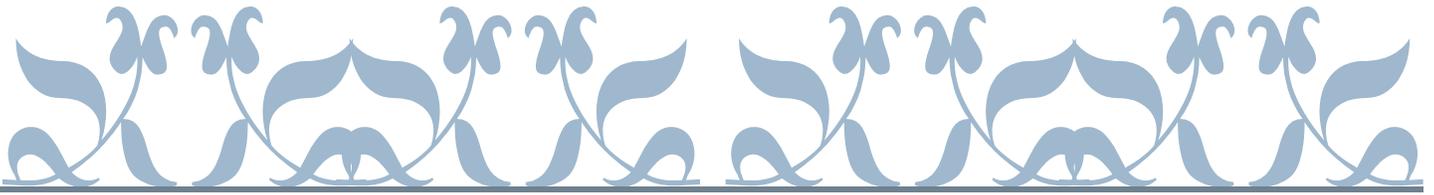


My mother was born in Gibraltar, that peculiar rock attached to Spain, but ever since the eighteenth century, a crown colony of Britain. She called herself a mongrel, because like so many Gibraltarians she was descended on her mother's side from Genoese Italians and southern Spaniards, and on her father's, from English ancestors. However, she was British, through and through. When I returned from a recent trip to Gibraltar to research her life, I told her that I'd been able to trace her family's domiciles all the way back to 1704. Without missing a beat, she said, "Well, of course, dear. That's when **WE** took the Rock."

Evacuated from Gibraltar in May of 1940 at the age of 13, she sailed through the rescue of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk, and after school, trained for war work even though she'd passed the entrance exams to Oxford. At the tender age of 17, she became a decoding agent for MI5, a fact she never told my father until the night before he jumped behind enemy lines into France. "Of course I couldn't tell him," she explained to me with a note of exasperation in her voice. "I'd signed the Official Secrets Act. My **parents** didn't even know what I did."

She met Daddy on August 31, 1942, the exact day that her only brother was killed in the battle of Alam Halfa in the Western desert of Egypt. Theirs was a ridiculously romantic wartime alliance, one that culminated in a wedding cobbled together in five rushed days when my father unexpectedly got leave from his training camp. There's a famous honeymoon photograph, showing them with my uncle John on the rooftop of the Ritz Hotel, while tracking a V-1 as it buzzed overhead and dropped, luckily, not on them, but into the middle of Green Park directly across the street. In early December of 1944, eighteen years old and pregnant with my oldest brother, Joe, she crossed the North Atlantic through the winter storms in a convoy dodging U-boats to start a life in





this foreign place called America. To give you an idea of how foreign it was, when my mother first told her parents that she was falling in love with a Yank, my British grandfather growled, "An American? We've never even met an American."

The Mummy we knew is the one who tested recipes for Julia Childs at the Monday Cooking Class, who volunteered in the emergency room at Washington Hospital Center, who was instrumental in starting the hospice movement, who went back to school after my father died and for fifteen years, worked as a medical research technologist for the Red Cross. She volunteered at St. Ann's in many capacities that ranged from running a youth group to organizing the lectors for services to caring for the elderly members of the parish to taking communion to shut-ins. In 2001, in recognition of her influence in the world as a lay woman of deep and abiding faith, she was awarded an honorary doctorate by Kings College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

And through all this, she continued to entertain, to open her house to anybody who needed a place to live for a while, many of them friends of ours, who remember well the comfort of months, even years spent under her roof. My mother was the epitome of that stirring British propaganda slogan. **KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON.** Despite eight separate operations for arthritis, she never complained. Even though she had to walk with crutches for the last twenty years of her life, that never stopped her. Her spirit was indomitable.

As you can imagine this has been a difficult time. Thank you for allowing me to share with you my love for my mother and my grief at her passing. Death feels inherently wrong because it is. It is a suffering we were never intended to know. But God is merciful and in his infinite love for us He surrounds us with friends and loved ones to help us in our time of need. Thank you for being a part of His love for us. We are grateful for the love and support that we have received.

As we have mentioned in our last couple of prayer requests, we are in need of a reliable used van to replace our aging and heavily used one. On our trip to DC we had two separate incidents with our car. We would like to replace it early in the new year. If you are able to help us with this through a special year end gift, then we would be extremely grateful. We have included an envelope for your convenience. If you want to send a check, please make it out to Cru or FamilyLife and note our account number (#0509086) on the memo line. Thank you for thinking about us at this particular time of year.

Serving Under His Mercy,

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