

# Ann Barbara “Puchly” Mulcahy, 92 – Friday, June 5, 2020 – 12 Noon – St. Thomas the Apostle Church, Corry, PA – Funeral Reflection

For every human being, life begins in the waters of mother's womb. For every Christian, life in the Spirit begins in the waters of Baptism, the womb of Mother Church. Ninety-two years ago in that winter of 1928, a little baby girl was Christened in the font at St. Elizabeth Church in Corry and given the name of Anna Barbara Puchly, and so began her journey as a daughter of the Father God, as a sister of the Lord Jesus, as a Christian filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as a member of the family of faith, the Church, as a disciple and friend of the Savior, devoted to His Blessed Mother Mary. That was the beginning of the journey of a lifetime.

This past Sunday, that earthly journey came to an end as, on Pentecost, the Birthday of the Church, Ann was born into eternal life, a life promised her in Baptism so long ago, a life where there are no more tears no more sadness, where there is no sickness or pain, where minds are clear and vision beholds Beauty unimaginable, and where she is reunited with love and family and friends to wait the day when we are all together again in one joyful heavenly embrace.

These last days and months and years cannot have been the easiest for Mom. She, whose nickname in her own family was “The Boss”, who had a mind for figures and a right way for doing just about anything, lived a

much simpler, more dependent life in her last years. Still, despite the issues with memory and mobility and not being in her own home with her own family, there were small blessings, small pleasures. Almost every time one of us would get to see her, she would perk up, her face alight with recognition and joy. "Hi!" she'd greet us and call us "my angel" or "honey" or "baby" and she'd ask us "what's new?" ... about ten or so times. I know when I'd see her on Friday's, she'd greet me like that and I'd feel so good, so blessed and then she'd say, "Is Brian here?" ... what am I, chicken liver?? She'd look at other residents and staff at Brandywine and ask, "Any of our family here?" There were still the little pleasures: potato chips and French fries, onion rings and shrimp cocktail, movies on TCM and sports that Brian would roar at and she would chuckle over his insanity. And every day, every blessed day she'd look on the bright side, "Is it a sunny day?" Isn't it funny that after a whole lifetime of striving and accomplishment, it can all come down to the simplest little things?!

And you know, if I were asked to talk about Ann's life, I who have rarely been at a loss for words, I would use just three, all beginning with the same letter: family; friendship; faith.

Mom came from a big family, a close family, a family that fought and loved, a family with saints and sinners, a family with big faults astounding gifts. Mom and Dad evidently liked something about the families they came from. They both wanted a big family too. They settled for four kids and as perfect as we turned out, there was no need for more! Family was everything: sisters and brothers; nephews and nieces; Godchildren and in-laws. Family was holidays and birthdays, milestones and reunions, meals and shared vacations, trips to the big city and a show, piling into a restaurant ordering everything on the

menu and closing the place down after picking up the check. Family was rejoicing in the good times and being there in the bad. Family made Mom's life wonderful!

Mom wasn't always the easiest person to get to know. My Dad loved you the second he met ya, but Mom was more reserved, more apt to give you the once over, hold back judgment or approval. But, if she came to think you were something, that there was something good about you, she became your friend, and that was a really great gift 'cause it wasn't fly-by-night or good-time-Charlie; it was for life in the fun and the failure, in the joys and the losses, in the birthings and the passings, when ya lived right next door or moved an ocean away, Mom was your friend and that was forever ... and that's all there was to it.

And the last word ... faith. I think Mom and her sisters and brothers got that from their Mom, Grandma, who many of us that knew her think was a real, honest-to-goodness saint. Growing up, we never missed Sunday Mass. We were sent to religious schools. My parents each prayed the rosary almost every day ... I can still see Mom's head bobbing as the prayers made her doze off in her chair or in the passenger seat of the car. Every trip we took began with a prayer for a safe trip, which my Dad gladly piped up for, no doubt hoping it might protect him from the corrections of a certain backseat driver! All the big family meals began with grace, all the sacraments received were celebrated, all the babies were baptized and my parents were Godparents to many of them. Faith held my parents together in tough times, faith brought them to accept the crosses and rejoice gratefully in the blessings.

Last Sunday, Pentecost, was Mom's last day on this earth. As she breathed her last, her first breath in the Spirit was drawn in eternity and she was born again into joy and life.

What you prayed for, Mom, in life ... family and friends in faith ... all those rosaries, all those prayers for a safe trip, they were answered in that moment. The trip is over and you're safely home. Your wedding anniversary, the 69<sup>th</sup>, would have been this month. You and Dad have that first dance in the Wedding Banquet of the Lamb and His Bride, the Church in heaven ... till we meet again.

Amen.