

Mother's Day Chalice May 11th 2008

Annie Spang

Good Morning.

My path to lighting this morning's Chalice is in itself a Mother's Day story so I'm going to share the mother-daughter vignette.

My mother-in-law, Polly Cowen was supposed to do the chalice with my husband Will. She was scheduled for hand surgery last Wednesday but being of hardy New England stock she minimized the impact and assumed she'd be fine by the weekend. Not until she got home Wednesday evening did she realize she really couldn't be here today. I'm their stand-in, but they will be here in a few weeks.

All went well with the surgery and when I arrived that evening Polly and her daughter Carolyn were relaxing with a (short) cocktail on the deck. I jumped into my Nurse Annie role and read up on the discharge plans. Polly can't drive for 2 weeks and asked if I could take her to her follow-up appointment. Looking at my calendar I realized I had a 7th grade parent-daughter lacrosse game that day. "Oh, those are very important", Polly quickly stated. There was no way that she wanted to interfere with that. I then shared with her that my participation may not be appreciated as I was a source of great embarrassment to my daughter in the last game because I played so hard. "Everyone was talking about it in the locker room Mom!" Polly had a great laugh over this; she certainly understood this experience having raised four children. Then with delight she added "That's just who you are, Annie." She was supporting who I was in a way that mothers unconditionally do; even as she was 4 hours post-op.

As I drove home I realized that although I had gone to Polly's to help her, it was she who had joyfully affirmed me. Over the years Polly has taken the time to know me. My own mother died from cancer at age 47 when I was 9 years old.

Twenty-two years ago, when Will and I were married, Polly kindly said at the rehearsal dinner that she felt like she was gaining another daughter not a daughter-in-law. She didn't need another daughter nearly as much as I needed a mother.

Happy Mother's Day Everyone!