

Eulogy for Mary Masl
December 9,2024
Presented by Patty Torba

From the day Mary was born, she broke the mold. Being the 5th child, mom and dad expected their reliable pattern to continue. Boy- girl- boy- girl- opps- GIRL... Mom had to cross out “Edgar” on the birth announcements and write “Mary”. Mary continued to set new pathways in life and was always the leader of the pack. When the cousins came over to play, it was always Mary who had the plan, executed the plan and all of us complied with THE plan. Mary was the one hanging upside down on the monkey bars and climbing higher than anyone else dared to go. She loved to take risks and didn’t worry too much about rules. She could skateboard down hills at high speeds and find the best place to hide. In kindergarten she thought it unfair that she couldn’t take the bus. She decided to get on the bus instead of walking home. After the bus driver took her to all the possible stops, Mary informed her to take her back to school and she would just walk home.

When we started attending St Louise de Marillac, Mary and her friend Maureen Miller were the first to run from school at dismissal bell. When the students walked home through the orange grove, we were pelted with oranges from above, Mary always had a great aim and could climb high.

Mary developed a passion for human rights at a young age and believed Grandma Zita that political involvement and changing laws was the way to make life better for everyone- especially the poor, oppressed, immigrants and minorities. Mary educated herself on issues and candidates and acquainted herself with legislators.

In 6th grade Mary and I helped grandma Zita with a telethon in Hollywood to raise money for a candidate. (Jerry Brown?) Besides the candidate, there were many celebrities present. Frustrated that she couldn't get close enough to talk with the candidate and celebrities, Mary went outside. She went to a payphone and called in a bomb scare. The building was cleared and Mary got to have the one on one time she craved with the candidate and celebrities.

Having an older sister Susie, inspired many of Mary's pranks. Mary went into Susie's room and took all of her bras. She used these as slingshots and threw rocks and jelly beans through the upstairs window and hit the neighbor's upstairs window. Like I said, she had excellent aim.

For younger sister Cathy, Mary was her idol. Cathy thought she was perfect and wanted to be just like her.

At Pomona Catholic High School, Mary heard "convent off limits" as an invitation. She and her friend Linda Borba went into the convent and had quite an adventure. They spread Vaseline on the toilets and put naked men magazines under the nun's pillows. To this day I don't know how she got the magazines.

First Friday mass was often preceded by Mary's pulling the fire alarms so that she could play hooky.

Mary loved to go to Linda Borba's dairy in Chino. At age 14, Mary drove both the tractor and truck in the open fields. Once the engine died and Mary had get out to walk. She was promptly chased by a bull. Her skills in climbing came to her rescue. Mary starred in "Wizard of Oz" as the scarecrow and sang and danced and did the authentic scarecrow flop. She also inspired Lizzy to be a cheer leader with some song leading choreography.

During high school Mary and I liked to go to mass on Saturday nights in Irwindale. The music was amazing with drum set, guitars, flute, many instruments and lots of Holy Spirit. Mary felt very close to Jesus during these times.

At 18 Mary married Terry then shortly after welcomed Michelle to the world. Even though she was young, Mary had natural maternal instincts. About a year and half later, now stationed in Germany, Mary gave birth to Sonya. With little to their name, and away from families, Mary was able to make those Christmases memorable. She has a little tree cut from the farm and used ribbons and paper chains to decorate to make sure her family had special holidays. All that running and climbing as a kid helped make her quite the softball player and helped her team win the Euro championship.

When they came back to California, Mary had her third and final daughter, Lisa.

She continued to follow her grandma Zita's lead in supporting local politics. As the president of the young democrats club at Mt SAC she got former senator George McGovern to visit the campus and speak to the club. Eventually, she was president of the West End Democratic Club for several years. She registered new voters, helped fundraise for several local politicians, worked to educate her community and was even a delegate for the California Democratic Party.

While her daughters were growing up, Mary could often be seen and heard on the softball field while Sonya and Lisa were playing. In fact, Mary, along with Terry, would coach their teams. When she wasn't in the dugout, she was in the bleachers cheering her daughters on and arguing with the umps! And if you know

Mary, you know her favorite baseball team was the Angels (she did like watching the Dodgers when Mike Sciosia played). At home the TV was either on a baseball game or on her political news shows (not Fox news though).

Her mischievous tendencies did not end when she became a mom. Mary loved to have fun and always found an opportunity for a water gun fight, and the occasional food fight. She had fun with the girls as a Girl Scout leader, swimming in the Masl grandparents' pool, and camping every summer.

Mary loved feeding people and cooked from the heart. Every Christmas she baked her heart out and sent her fudge and cookies and gave them to everyone. She'd wait in line at the post office to make sure her cookies got to her sisters, nieces, and nephews all over the country, and even to Lisa when she lived in Abu Dhabi!

She was also known for her spaghetti and meatballs, only knowing how to make it in a huge pot feeding at least 25 people. One day her daughters, Sonya and Lisa and a group of her friends went to a music festival. Everyone met at Mary's since she let them take her van so everyone could fit in one car. When they got back to the house at midnight Mary had a pan of lasagna coming out of the oven. She even prepared a salad and garlic bread! She knew this group of young adults would be hungry.

Mary loved her nieces and nephews. Before she became a grandma, she treated each one of them like her own child. Every holiday she made sure every niece and nephew had Easter baskets, Christmas presents, cookies, and squirt guns.

Mary was so happy to become a grandma. When Sonya called to promote mom to Grandma, Mary screamed with joy. She would pick Evan up from daycare 5 hours early every day to spend time with her grandbaby (more like to spoil her grandbaby). Evan, Ella, and Owen became the new prides of her life. As the grandkids grew, Mary enjoyed sleepovers, performances, sports games, and school events.

Throughout her life, Mary held fast to her beliefs, rejecting organized religions that practiced sexism, racism, or homophobia. But her faith in God and her sense of justice never wavered. Mary lived by the spirit of James 1:27: “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and undefiled is this: to come to the aid of orphans and widows in their hardships and to keep oneself untarnished by the world.” Mary’s “religion” was love in action—standing up for justice, feeding her family, and filling our lives with joy.

This is what Mary wants us to know. She loves each of us very Muench..

Evan, Ella and Owen- Your grandmother loves you very much and is watching out for you.

Michelle, Sonya and Lisa: Keep on fighting. Keep on keeping on. Your mom lives on through each of you.

Chris and Dan: Continue to love and take good care of your wives.

To all of us: Take care of each other. Continue to be THERE for each other. By sharing our sorrow, we can give it wings, lighten its weight and let it fly.

Mary left us with full hearts and sweet memories.

We love you Mary. We will never forget you.