

Visiting Mom

I've written previously that my sister has welcomed our mother into her home on a full-time basis due to mom's lack of mobility and advancing frailty. This saint of a woman has been the care-giver for two other people in her lifetime, namely her mother-in-law and her late husband. Our family is blessed by her patience and willingness to perform the non-glamorous tasks of providing meals, washing bed linens and assisting in the activities of daily living that an older adult often has trouble performing on her own. Without my sister's intervention, mom would be residing in a nursing home, spending what little money she has been able to save, living with strangers. I don't mean to suggest that there is something wrong with nursing facilities, after all, I work for an organization that runs a very good nursing home, but I'd like my mother to be spared living in an institution for as long as possible.

In order to give my sister some respite from these responsibilities, I offer to visit with mom periodically for a few hours to give my sister a chance to get out of the house, go shopping or exercise at the gym. Yesterday I had the chance to visit with mom and catch up on her less than busy life. The house was quiet on a Sunday afternoon so we were able to engage in a variety of short conversations that often go unspoken due to her extreme hearing loss. After catching up on my uncle's rehabilitation after a stroke and her friend Elda's recovery from a broken hip, we settled in and spent the afternoon watching the Cubs play their first televised ballgame of the spring training season in Arizona. Baseball and the Cubs have been the source of many spirited conversations between us, ranging from the exorbitant salaries paid young ball players to the apparent lack of respect for the game that often surfaces in the course of labor relations and club house arguments.

Inevitably mom recalls the day she went to Comiskey Park and saw Babe Ruth play and hit a home run. She remembers Ladies Day when women got to see a major league baseball game free of charge. The other sad truth she notices is the youthful faces of the rookie ball players. They didn't look that young when I was growing up. Where have the years gone anyway?

The Cubs beat the Dodgers yesterday but it didn't really matter. It didn't matter that Albert Pujols wants to get paid \$30 million dollars a year for playing a game. It also doesn't matter if the Cubs don't win the World Series again for the 101st consecutive year. What really mattered was that two people shared time together continuing their lifelong relationship. The many years and gray hairs had dropped away and what remained was special – the bond between a mother and her son.