Love, Gaels: Home is a peoples

Is home a property? could home a feeling? Perhaps even an experience? Every human yearns to belong to a fold or pack in this world. For this issue of “Love, Gaels”, I wanted to allow readers the opportunity to learn about where home is for me. I grew up in the Bronx, New York, birthplace of Hip-hop, home of the Yankees, and communities that welcome you with open arms. Although my loyalty to my borough is never-ending, We had to learn to grow up fast as kids. Being a city kid coming from an immigrant family household, expectations were high and there was never a shortage of new experiences. I’ve made friends from all walks of life, and shared some of my most memorable and life changing moments with them. That being said, like most Bronxites, I have roots that go deeper than the potholes on the highway. My family immigrated from Greece in the late 70’s due to economic hardship and being promised the ever so famous “American Dream”. The Greek diaspora brought over our food, faith, and culture along with the people that arrived here. They say stereotypes don’t hold any weight, well, ours did. Yes, we were in the food business, after school I vividly remember having to take two buses back home going through Fordham to help my father and his Gyro business. I also had the responsibility of attending Greek dance/culture classes because my parents wouldn’t have it any other way (I hated it). So in a way, my sense of culture was always reinforced and encouraged, but as kids we never looked at it as being special. I always denied it in the past, but I grew to admire many of the national heroes and history of our heritage through all the stories and holidays. Every so often the stars would align and we would take a family trip to where our family lives in Greece. To tourists or even those going back to experience where they come from like myself, It is completely different from the fast paced hustle and bustle of NYC. From the weekends at Grandma’s (yiayia) to the insurmountable food portions during feasts in the Church, my heart was touched. People view a trip like this as a vacation, but to me, It Is a pilgrimage. A return to where my people who fought for years to retain the pride and freedom we have held to for thousands of years. God, family, and country means everything to me, so to be blessed to the point where I can hold true to those things is true joy in my eyes.