

Message from the Minister, Mothers Day May 10, 2020

Greetings dear friends.

As I talk to people, I am convinced that there are more clean cupboards, closets reorganized, garages cleaned, rooms painted and dogs that are exhausted from long and frequent walks than ever before. One man began to reorganize his sock drawer only to remember he had done that a couple of days before. Now there are among us, more creative types that are knitting up a storm, sewing, carving and painting beautiful pictures. A friend of mine is scanning all his old photos onto the computer. Some fortunate folks who live near open spaces are out walking, re-experiencing the glory of the creation. It seems that we are all finding new ways to fill our days as we shelter in place. One excellent thing to occur is that folks are contacting people that, perhaps, they haven't seen or talked to for some time. It could be that absence does make the heart grow fonder.

No matter what we are doing to fill our days, we are adjusting to a new world, we are finding new and often rewarding ways to be together, apart.

This Sunday we face a new challenge as we celebrate Mother's Day without the hugs that are usually a part of this day.

Mother and God. More Voices 280

*Mother and God, to you we sing: warm is your womb, warm is your wing.
In you we live, move and are fed: sweet flowing milk, life-giving bread.
Mother and God, to you we bring all broken hearts, all broken wings.*

Scripture. John 14:23-27 NIV

Then the disciples said "But Lord why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?" Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

The Message

One of the best newspaper cartoons of all time is Calvin and Hobbes. One day Calvin comes marching into the living room early one morning. His mother is seated in her

favourite chair. She is sipping her morning coffee. She looks up at young Calvin. She is amused and amazed at how he is dressed. Calvin's head is encased in a large space helmet. A cape is around his neck, across his shoulders, down his back and is dragging on the floor. One hand is holding a flashlight and the other a baseball bat.

"What's up today?" His mom asks.

"Nothing so far," answers Calvin.

"So far?", she questions.

"Well, you never know," Calvin says, "Something could happen today." Then Calvin marches off, "And if anything does, by golly, I'm going to be ready for it!"

Calvin's mom looks out at the reading audience and says, "I need a suit like that!"

Well mom's, ain't it the truth.

I want to suggest to you today that there are many moms who have such suits, suits that disarm the violence and fear and disappointments the world brings upon us. Suits that are prepared to meet whatever is thrown at them—because they love.

This is a Mother's Day message I'm sharing without apology and with appreciation for that time-honoured institution without the benefit of which, we wouldn't be here! For thus we become.

Every Mother's Day Message needs a disclaimer. As ministers, we cannot get too sentimental about motherhood because:

- for some motherhood is an accident and not always a welcome one.
- for some biological motherhood is not an option
- for some mothers were not all that nice
- for some, motherhood under the very best circumstances is still less than a bed of roses
- for some, the loss of a mother was tragic and the grief lingers on
- for some, in this time, there are those who have lost a mom without being able to be at her side and then unable to grieve in the usual ways.

If I can take some liberties with poet Wilhelm Busch's words, "To become a (mother) is not so difficult; on the other hand, being a (mother) is very much so."

So, with all those qualifications, why bother with Mother's Day at all? I'll tell you why – – because for all it's stumbling blocks, pitfalls and broken dreams, all the soiled diapers and spoiled plans, we're talking about a beautiful idea and natural part of God's creative plan to bring love and caring to light. Motherhood is a constant demand for the gift of love and caring.

Motherhood is one of the avenues from which comes the peace that Jesus talked about in our gospel. Peace. Not giving in the way the world gives - peace that comes through, like the love of a mother with no strings attached – pure, genuine, simple, or giving.

Somebody said it takes about six weeks to get back to normal after you've had a baby... Somebody doesn't know that once you're a mother "normal" is history.

Somebody said being a mother is boring... Somebody never rode in a car driven by a teenager with a new learner's permit.

Somebody said if you're a "good" mother, your child will "turn out good"... Somebody thinks a child comes with directions and guarantees.

Somebody said "good" mothers never raise their voices... Somebody never came out of the back door just in time to see her child hit a golf ball through the neighbour's kitchen window.

Somebody said you don't need an education to be a mother... Somebody never helped a fourth grader with his math.

Somebody said you can't love the second child as much as you love the first... Somebody doesn't have two children.

Somebody said a mother can find all the answers to her child rearing questions in books... Somebody never had a child stuff eyes from toys in her nose or beans in her ears.

Somebody said the hardest part of being a mother is labour and delivery... somebody never watched her "baby" get on the bus for the first day of kindergarten or on a plane headed for some far off country.

Somebody said a mother can do her job with her eyes closed and one hand tied behind your back... Somebody never organized seven giggling brownies to sell cookies.

Somebody said a mother can stop worrying after her child gets married... Somebody doesn't know that marriage adds a new son or daughter-in-law to a mother's heart strings.

Somebody said a mother's job is done when your last child leaves home... Somebody never had grandchildren

Somebody said your mother knows you love her, so you don't need to tell her... Somebody isn't a mother.

Pass this along to all the "mothers" in your life, and to everyone who ever had a mother. This isn't just about being a mother, it's about appreciating the people in your life while you have them... No matter who that person is.

"Peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give." Mothers are often the best folks to call us back to our Christian beliefs.

I was very disturbed some years ago now, upon hearing of the news that Osama Bin Ladin had been killed, that people gathered in Washington and New York to celebrate. Many were young people who told news reporters that they were only children at the time. They said that finally they had their revenge. Wow! A culture that begets young people who celebrate revenge. I found this comment from another young person: "I will not rejoice in the death of one, not even an enemy". Jessica Dovey then quotes Martin Luther King Jr., "Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that."

Peace.

It seems to me that mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers have a large part to play in developing the attitudes of our young people. I think I would like to meet Jessica Dovey's parents.

And so, this being Mother's Day, I want to offer a blessing to mothers — and dads and all of you have been like a parent to someone. Understand that this is for you too.

To active mothers, new mothers, elderly mothers and all in between, to mothers all over the world, to mothers lost to us physically, but so alive in spirit and so present to us.

This blessing is for all the mothers who have sat up all night with a sick toddler saying, "it's OK honey, mom is here."

This blessing is for the mothers who gave birth to babies they may never see. And the mothers who took those babies - – forever to be their own children.

This blessing is for all the mothers who attended ball games, recitals, rehearsals, etc., etc., and who said, "I wouldn't have missed it for the world, " and meant it.

This blessing is for all the mothers of Iraq, Syria, Sudan and Afghanistan who fled in the night and can't find their children or can't feed their children.

Creator God, what makes a good mother anyway? Is it patience? Firmness? A soft lap?

Or is mothering what is in her heart?

Is it the ache she feels when she watches her child disappear down the street, walking to school alone for the very first time?

The jolt that takes her from sleep to dread, from bed to crib at 2 AM to put her hand on the back of a sleeping baby?

The need to flee from wherever she is and hug her child when she hears news of a school shooting, a fire, a car accident, a baby dying?

Yes, it is so.

So, this blessing is for all the mothers who sat down with their children and explained all about making babies. And for all the mothers who wanted to but just couldn't.

This blessing is for all the mothers who yell at their kids in the grocery store with frustration and despair.

This blessing is for the mothers who show up at work with milk stains on their blouses and diapers in their purse.

This is a blessing for all mothers who teach their sons to cook and their daughters to speak up with pride.

This blessing is for mothers who put pinwheels, teddy bears, or flowers on their children's graves.

This blessing is for mothers whose children have gone astray, who haven't the words to reach them, and yet have never put them from their heart.

This blessing is for new mothers stumbling through diaper changes and sleep deprivation and mature mothers learning to let go. For working mothers and stay at home mothers. Single mothers and married mothers.

And this blessing is for all of us who will move beyond sentiment into actions which support mothers and mothering persons in all of their life-giving and life-nurturing roles.

And so thanks to moms, present and past. Thanks to my mom. For thus I have become.

And the people said

Will you pray with me....

Holy One, creator of all that is good, we praise you for your creative power and you're like- a- mother's love. We thank you for calling us together into the household of faith. We thank you for our mothers, grandmothers and ancient foremothers in faith. God of our children and grandchildren we entrust to you the members of our families near and far, living and dead and pray that you will keep them in your loving care. We pray for your healing presence to help those families who suffer hunger and homelessness, who seek refuge from violence, who are trapped in poverty, who are torn apart by bitterness, hurt or betrayal. Open our eyes creator God to our kinship with the whole creation and our relatedness with all the people of the world.

Loving God, we know in our world there is sickness and there is even death.

But, they say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise you can hear the birds again.

They say that after just a few weeks of quiet the sky is no longer thick with fumes, but blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi people are singing to each other across the empty squares, keeping their windows open so that those who are alone may hear the sounds of family around them.

They say that a hotel in the west of Ireland is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.

Today a young woman is busy spreading flyers with her phone number through the neighbourhood so that elders may have someone to call on.

All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting.

All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way

All over the world people are waking up to a new reality; to how big we really are; to how little control we really have; to what really matters; to love.

So we pray and we remember that, yes there is fear, but there does not have to be hate.

Yes there is isolation, but there does not have to be loneliness.

Wake us to the choices we make as to how to live now.

Today, let us listen behind the factory noises of our panic.

The birds are singing again. The sky is clearing. Spring is coming

And we are always encompassed by love.

Open the windows of our soul and though we may not be able to touch across the empty square,

SING!

Benediction. In You there is a Refuge. More Voices# 84

In you there is a refuge, in you we find our peace.
When all we know is chaos may our trust in you increase
In you there is a silence, in you are minds are clear.
When all we hear is discord may your quiet draw us near.

In you there is a vision, in you we learn to dream.

When all we see is desert may you be our living stream.
In you there is a future, in you we find our way.
When hope has shed its brightness may you show us a new day.

All my best wishes to the moms and thanksgiving for the memories we carry with us of our mothers.

Blessings, Rick

Please enjoy this Fantastic version of "It is Well with my Soul" (Shared by Lisa)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyPEohF6qq8>