

May 10, 2020 Mother's Day

"Mother of the New"

As we gather together for worship today, light or turn on a candle signifying Christ in our midst.
Read the Helen Steiner Rice poem

What Is a Mother

It takes a Mother's LOVE
to make a house a home.
A place to be remembered,
no matter where we roam . . .
It takes a Mother's PATIENCE
to bring a child up right.
And her COURAGE and her CHEERFULNESS
to make a dark day bright . . .
It takes a Mother's THOUGHTFULNESS
to mend the heart's deep "hurts".
And her SKILL and her ENDURANCE
to mend little socks and shirts . . .
It takes a Mother's KINDNESS
to forgive us when we err.
To sympathize in trouble
and bow her head in prayer . . .
It takes a Mother's WISDOM
to recognize our needs
And to give us reassurance
by her loving words and deeds . . .
It takes a Mother's ENDLESS FAITH,
her CONFIDENCE and TRUST
To guide us through the pitfalls
of selfishness and lust . . .
And that is why in all this world
there could not be another
Who could fill God's purpose
as completely as a MOTHER!

Helen Steiner Rice

Thank you God for both our biological mothers and mothers in heart. Amen

Sing or read aloud "Happy The Home When God Is There" UMH # 445

1. Happy the home when God is there,
and love fills every breast;
when one their wish, and one their prayer,
and one their heavenly rest.
2. Happy the home where Jesus' name
is sweet to every ear;
where children early speak his fame,
and parents hold him dear.
3. Happy the home where prayer is heard,
and praise is wont to rise;
where parents love the sacred Word
and all its wisdom prize.
4. Lord, let us in our homes agree
this blessed peace to gain;
unite our hearts in love to thee,
and love to all will reign.

Offertory Prayer:

Giving to God and God's work is our highest privilege. May the gifts we give this week bring honor to you God as we share our tithes and offerings today

Scripture thoughts on John 19: 23-27

Our Scripture today is frequently read on Good Friday as part of the death of Jesus story. Looking closer at it, we see our Lord when dying on the cross, was concerned about His mother. Mother's Day is a good time to talk about the provision Jesus made for her - Jesus was concerned for His mother's welfare.

In those days, a mother's children were her Medicare, her Social Security, and her Pension. Our Lord, in showing His concern for her, gives us a model to follow in our own families.

John 19: 23-27 CEB

23 When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and his sandals, and divided them into four shares, one for each soldier. His shirt was seamless, woven as one piece from the top to the bottom. 24 They said to each other, "Let's not tear it. Let's cast lots to see who will get it." This was to fulfill the scripture, They divided my clothes among themselves, and they cast lots for my clothing. That's what the soldiers did. 25 Jesus' mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene stood near the cross. 26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your

son.” 27 Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

“Mother of the New”

Pastor Heather

Psalm 127: 3 states: “Children are a gift from the Lord. They are a real blessing. “I believe this with my whole heart. I thank God for my children Erik and Kirstin every day and even though I can’t be physically present with them today on Mother’s Day - they are very much on my mind.”

Some of you know Dick and I have a blended family. His children are very good to me and we’ve become special friends and their children - our grandchildren and now great grandchildren have a special place in my heart.

May seems to be the month when we think about families. The church has a special name designated for this Sunday . . .”Festival of the Christian Home”. I think that is truly appropriate because it helps us focus on the variety of family situations today. It helps us remember - all of us had a mother. Some of us are mothers or grandmothers biologically and some of us share in those special relationships with others by heart relationships.

I am amazed at the articles which yearly appear about this time sharing stories of remarkable families. Last year I read about one family who had 2 children of their own and then took in 20 others! The logistics of meal preparation and laundry for that number is mind boggling to me. Their response to such detailed questions was: “There’s always room for one more when you love God and His children” “Once you get started adopting, you want to take more”

This is Mary’s second appearance in John’s gospel. The first was 3 years ago, when she badgered Him about the shortage of wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. “Woman,” He said then “What concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.” Now, presumably it has.

Fortunately, Mary is not alone watching her son die. Her sister is there, along with Mary Magdalene, and Mary the wife of Clopas. The beloved disciple is also with her - a man who is never named in John’s gospel, although he appears at least 5 times. Jesus’ love for him is the only thing that seems to matter. That is his only identity: that Jesus loves him. We do not even know why.

Perhaps it is his loyalty, since he is the only male disciple standing there. The women are not in nearly as much danger as he is. Since a woman’s testimony won’t hold up in court, they are not likely to be stopped and questioned, but he is, especially if he looks and sounds like a Galilean. Where are the others? Safe, somewhere. Safe and guilty. This may take a load off Jesus’ mind because He doesn’t have to worry about them, but it must also hurt Him as much as the nails

do, because they would not follow Him all the way. We do not know any of this. All we know is that Jesus concerns himself with those who are there - with His mother, whose face is dissolving in front of Him, and the beloved disciple, who has appointed himself her bodyguard.

Although they are near enough to hear Him, He does not seem to see them at first. There is a lot going on. The soldiers are dividing up His clothes into 4 piles: robe, prayer shawl, belt and sandals. Passerbys are straining to make out the sign over His head, while the chief priests are arguing that Pilate should change what it says (Many paintings of Jesus on the cross show a sign above Him that reads "INRI." These are the first letters of each of the four Latin words that mean "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." John said these same words were also written in Aramaic and Greek so everyone could read them..

But finally Jesus does see them, and when He does, He speaks. First He looks at His mother: "Woman," He says - the same thing He called her before at the wedding - "Woman, here is your son." Then He looks at the disciple standing before her and says to him, "Here is your mother." Since His hands are not free, He has to do a lot of work with His eyes, indicating which woman and which man. When He is through, the adoption is final. From that hour, John says, the beloved disciple took Jesus' mother into his own home.

* In this gesture - of extreme compassion - was Jesus looking out for His mother or for His disciple. Who needed whom more?

That Jesus placed His mother in the care of His disciple is our clue that she is a widow. Although Joseph is mentioned twice by name, he never shows up in John's gospel at all. He has presumably died by the time Jesus reaches adulthood, which makes Mary a widow, whose status depends on the surviving members of her husband's household. When Jesus dies, she will belong to no one. She will be responsible to and for herself.

If she were rich and well placed, this might be good news to her, but she is not. It is far more likely that she will eat other people's leftovers for the rest of her life, with no father, no husband or son to protect her from the cruel things that people say and do. So it is merciful of Jesus to give her a new son. But it is also merciful of Him to give that son a new mother, especially this one. Mary must be under 50 years old when her son is crucified. She is no girl, but she is not ancient either.

When the beloved disciple takes her home, and when the other disciples come out of hiding, they will find themselves in the presence of someone whose contact with the Holy Spirit has been far more intimate than theirs. She has seen things they have only heard about. She has felt things they cannot imagine. Perhaps that is why she stayed put while they fled. Perhaps that is what let her look full into the ruined face that no one but her (and her new son) could bear to see.

While the principalities and powers believe they are tearing His family apart, Jesus is quietly

putting it together again: this mother with this son, this past with this future. Although his enemies will succeed in killing Him, He will leave no orphans behind. At the foot of the cross, the mother of the old, becomes the mother of the new. The beloved disciple becomes the new beloved son.

For some of us Jesus model hits close to home. For reasons of distance or other factors, some of us may be unable to care for our children or parents. We need to find an “adoptive” person to care for them.

To me it is amazing how God brings people into our lives when we need them most. My mother died when she was 84 years old. Because of the excellent Canadian health system, I could not move her to Indiana - even if she wanted to come. She had health problems for about 15 years. For the past 7 years of her life, a young family who lived next door “adopted” her as their Grandma. They mowed her grass in summer - shoveled her driveway in winter. They have 3 girls. The oldest was 13 and has cerebral palsy and spends her days in a wheelchair (sometimes showing my mother the wheelies she can do in her driveway). The 10 and 8 year olds weeded my mother’s flowerbeds and carted her garbage can in and out.

My mother sat with Chelsea in the wheelchair while the other 2 went to sports activities. No money changed hands. My mother told the girls stories about her childhood and about Jesus. They were an unchurched family. Every day the girls stopped in to say Hi to her after school and she sat on her porch and watched them get on the school bus in the morning.

It was a love relationship born of the heart not of blood. They are “family” in the truest sense.

On this Mother’s Day, look around you as Jesus did. Is there someone lonely or hurting - a child or an adult that you could reach out to - as Jesus had a mother of the New . . . so can you.

As we close with the hymn “Blest Be The Tie That Binds” UMH #557

Think about how God still speaks through the great hymns or praise songs today. A.W. Tozer remarked in “We Travel on Appointed Way”: “After the sacred scriptures, the next best companion for the soul is a good hymnal”

Sing or read aloud the hymn.

1. Blest be the tie that binds
our hearts in Christian love;
the fellowship of kindred minds
is like to that above.
2. Before our Father’s throne
we pour our ardent prayers;
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,

our comforts and our cares.

3. We share each other's woes,
our mutual burdens bear;
and often for each other flows
the sympathizing tear.

4. When we asunder part,
it gives us inward pain;
but we shall still be joined in heart,
and hope to meet again.

We have a few extra hymnals at church, if you would like one for home worship, please contact Nancy 744-3449 and she will arrange for a time you can pick one up.

Closing Blessing:

As we leave our worship time today God, we know you are the tie that "Binds us Together" as we live by faith and not fear. Peace be with you until we meet again. Amen.