Mother’s Day 2016

May 7, 2016

Happy Mother’s Day! Today we celebrate, honor, and give thanks to our own mothers and all mothers everywhere. We praise all women who offer their hearts compassionately, whether they have borne children or not.

Proverbs 31 describes some information that the mother of King Lemuel shared with him. She was extolling the benefits of finding a virtuous and capable wife. Someone the husband could trust; someone who was energetic and a hard worker, preparing meals, spinning thread, making bedspreads and belts, and extending a hand to the poor. Verses 25-20 say this: 25 *She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs without fear of the future. 26 When she speaks, her words are wise, and she gives instructions with kindness. 27 She carefully watches everything in her household and suffers nothing from laziness. 28 Her children stand and bless her. Her husband praises her saying: 29 “There are many virtuous and capable women in the world, but you surpass them all!”*

Yes, that about sums up all of our mothers. Regardless of how good of belt makers and spinners they were, they did the best they could with the best they had and the best they knew. We praise mothers for their fortitude and their selfless devotion to their children, despite how sometimes we drive them crazy.

Here is a story that illustrates that point. Luke 2:41-52

*41Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. 42When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. 43After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. 44Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. 45When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. 46After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."*

*49"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" 50But they did not understand what he was saying to them.*

*51Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*

I love this story out of the Bible, because it illustrates that not much has changed in family dynamics for thousands of years. Isn’t it typical that when families travel there is confusion. We’ve all heard stories of families that have gone off and left a child behind. In fact the movie “Home Alone” is based upon that scenario. So now we know that it isn’t just fiction, it’s Biblical!

So they discovered that Jesus was missing, and then spent three days looking for him. They probably felt just like you or I would feel – fearful, anxious, concerned. But when they found him that all probably turned to a combination of relief and anger. And isn’t it a typical statement for the mother to say something similar to, “How could you do this to me?”

We are commanded by God to honor our father and our mother so that we can live long in the land of the Lord. Jesus did that when he was confronted by his mother.

The stereotypical mothering strategy is to lay as much guilt on their children as possible. “How can you treat us like this,” pretty much qualifies for such a tactic. But Jesus was all about God’s business even by age twelve. Not only was he all about God, but he was able to teach and understand principles that his elders could not fathom.

This did not go unnoticed by his mother. So when Jesus honored his mother and father, and left with them, Mary remembered all that she had seen, and treasured all those things in her heart. She was proud of her son, as only a mother can be.

There must be written in the ethers a hand book for mothers – Mystical Mothering 101. It seems that mothers have been saying the same phrases forever. Have you ever heard a mother say any of these?

• Always wear clean underwear; you never know when you'll be in an accident.

• Don't make that face or it'll freeze in that position.

• Be careful or you'll put your eye out.

• What if everyone jumped off a cliff? Would you do it, too?

• You have enough dirt behind those ears to grow potatoes!

• Close that door! Were you born in a barn?

• If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all.

• Don't put that in your mouth; you don't know where it's been!

* Don’t eat that you’ll get worms.
* Eat that: it puts hair on your chest; it’s good for what ails you.
* Don’t pick the scab; it’ll get infected and leave a scar.
* Wait till your father gets home.

"No matter how old a mother is, she watches her middle-aged children for signs of improvement." -- Florida Scott-Maxwell

"A mother is a person who seeing there are only four pieces of pie for five people, promptly announces she never did care for pie." -- Tenneva Jordan

"A mother is not a person to lean on, but a person to make leaning unnecessary." -- Dorothy Canfield Fisher

I also recognize that not all people have had a wonderful experience with their earthly mother. After all, we are just human beings doing the best we can with what we know. You’ve heard the expression, “If we knew better, we’d do better.” For some people, Mother’s Day will be about forgiveness: either asking for forgiveness, or granting forgiveness. I believe our Loving God wants us to honor our Mothers, no matter how good or bad a job they did raising us. They were the Divine vessel that bore us, grew us, and brought us into this life so that God could then take over. Truly, they did their job; the rest is up to us.

If you need to resolve some issues with your own mother, I encourage you to do so in the quiet of your thoughts and prayers. If you need to heal some things, and your mother is no longer walking this earth, speak to her anyway – from the soul level.

Forgiveness is not limited to the material world. Pray over any unresolved issue you might have and ask her for forgiveness, or grant her your forgiveness. Release the guilt and hurt, so that you can grow. Honor them, whether they are in body or not, so that things might go well for you and you might live long.

Jesus came to earth at a time and place when Judaism was the primary thought process. The Jews did not conceive of God as a personal God, but one of power acting on our behalf.

One thing that Jesus taught was that God was personal, and the way he taught that was by calling upon God as Father. Jesus taught that it was right to have a personal relationship with God.

This idea was not new to the world, but it was lost to the people to whom Jesus was sent to help. For thousands of years prior to Jesus it was a prevalent idea that God had different natures. The Hindi people long believed that part of God’s nature was feminine.

Although Westerners believe that Hinduism teaches polytheism, or the belief in many Gods, according to some authorities the 1000 plus references to God in the Hindu scriptures serve to define the various aspects of God, rather than describe separate gods.

The feminine aspect of God is important to many religions, but not so to Christians. Yet the idea that God is Creator, birther of the Cosmos and all that is, can easily be viewed as a mothering nature. So it is also easy to see how God as Father, Mother and Friend, non-gendered and all inclusive, can help develop the personal nature of God in our minds and hearts.

We are made in God’s image, non-gendered spirit. Our physical bodies have specific genders, and our DNA directs us toward particular thought patterns and behaviors; our spirit natures are unlimited and reflective of the feminine/masculine all-encompassing nature that is God.

Each of us, at the spiritual level, is mother and father, regardless of our physical form. We can nurture, we can create, we can bring order, we can construct, and we are wise and loving, logical and compassionate, spontaneous and thoughtful.

So in this sense there is a Divine Feminine nature and a Heavenly Father nature to each of us. I refer to these various natures of God in my introductions to prayer.

When we celebrate Mother’s Day, on the earthly level we celebrate our Mothers, and all the women – whether aunts, grandmas, sisters, or friends - who have helped us and nurtured us at some point in our lives.

On the spiritual level, we celebrate the Divine Mother within each of us. We celebrate the spiritual family into which we have been born, and we celebrate the power of a Mother’s love.

So at all levels, I wish you a supremely happy Mother’s Day.

Let us pray…