

# May 10, 2020 – Are you my mother?

With Carol Hyde, LLWL

Christian Family Sunday, Fifth Sunday of Easter

*Have a candle ready to light and if you wish a picture or pictures of your family beside the candle in recognition of Christian Family Sunday*

## INVITATION TO WORSHIP

Let us gather now, finding a quiet centre in our homes which have become sanctuaries.

Let us come to worship our loving God who has given us the gift of family, both biological and spiritual.

We come with gratitude for the many ways You touch our lives through the love families share with us, for the way You challenge us to offer our love to all.

We come with praise and gratitude for the gift of Jesus who is the ultimate example of mothering through sacrificial love, nurturing and caring.

Come let us worship God.

## LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

*Light a candle and say the following*

On this fifth Sunday of Easter, we light this candle knowing that even in these difficult times, Jesus Christ is the light of the world. May we let our light shine so that others may know the mothering nature of Christ's love.

## SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 12:46-50 New International Version (NIV)

Jesus' Mother and Brothers

While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you."

He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

## MESSAGE: Are you my mother?

*This message has been prepared by Carol Hyde, LLWL, for the Faith United Milton congregation on May 10, 2020 and is also shared with Palermo United. ©Carol Hyde 2020. Provided here with permission.*

Today is Mother's Day and the celebration Christian Family Sunday in the United Church of Canada. When I was teaching grade one this was a very important time of the year. We read stories about mothers – animal mothers, make-believe moms and real moms.

One of my favourite books was called "Are You My Mother?" In it, a baby bird falls from its nest and proceeds to wander the neighbourhood asking all the animals if they are his mother.

On this Family Sunday it is good for us, as Christians, to consider who is really our mother.

When God wanted to come to earth in human form, the one indispensable person was Mary, the one chosen to be the mother of Christ.

Mother's Day is a time to celebrate mothers but it also creates a dilemma for us. It can be a poignant, even painful church day, and that colours how we celebrate it. That is especially true this year as we are often separated due to the pandemic.

When death has taken away our mothers this can be a day of sad memories. The celebration can also be a problem in that it includes some people and excludes others. We are not all mothers, we're not all women, and sad to say, not everyone has a great mother memory.

So, it's worth making the extra effort to celebrate not only mothers but also mothering and all the examples in life of people in general, women in particular, whose lives touched us, shaped us, strengthened and encouraged us. Stories abound in media of women that show that mothering starts with giving love – not giving birth. With love as the basis of mothering then the world opens up to the role of Christian love in our lives.

There is a grandmother who adopts her grandchild, a foster mom who chooses to be there for a troubled boy and an aunt who makes a promise to always be there for her niece. There are countless step-mothers, adoptive mothers, single mothers and regular moms who should be honoured today, but there are also the less obvious group leaders, coaches, teachers, friends and neighbours who fulfill the role.

Gender is no barrier to mothering either. There are the stay-at-home dads and gay dads, grandpas who watch out for the neighbourhood children and the elderly men who care for their ailing partners.

Take a moment and reflect on all those of all genders and ages who have played a mothering role in your life. Who is your mother?

Can you create a list of things those mothering us do?

In part, a mother's role is to make sure that you reach the higher points in life, making sure that if you fall down you just start up again. A mother is an encourager. That's what Mary was for Jesus. That's what good folks, good neighbours, good co-workers, good Christians do for others.

One of the great stories of the Bible is the story of Mary and all the ways she stood by Jesus, even when "he had a mouth on him" or when, at age 12, he didn't tell her where he was going; even when he was doing things that didn't make sense to her. Mary stayed giving a little gentle encouragement, a little practical advice, a little nudge in the right direction, a little reminder that, "hey, you may be the Son of God, but I'm your mother – listen to me." And I think we know he did. Jesus spoke to the children in a motherly way and worried about a widow's lost coin. He cared for his flock by feeding them with stories and parables, techniques used by all who mother.

Jesus loved his disciples with a love that was motherly and caring.

Jesus wanted to protect his followers like a mother hen who gathers her young under her wings. Mary never gave up on her son. She was there through the terrible times and then again at the joyous time of resurrection.

Jesus knew how mothers worked. That's why Jesus was able to tell others that whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and my mother.

We are all mothers, doing God's will in the here and now. We are of God and loved by God.

Jesus, like an encouraging mother, says to you and me today: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."

May you and I indeed love as Christ loved, and still loves us.

For in him and in God is found all that makes life worthwhile. In him is the hope of the world, as we have seen in the resurrection of Christ. And through him comes that which gives life, abundant life.

If Christ asked you today "Are you my mother?" I pray that you would answer "yes", in love.

God bless all those who mother and love on this special day and on every day. Amen

**HYMN: Would You Bless Our Homes and Families**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fht7NqipkQY&feature=youtu.be>

**BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH**

On this Christian Family Sunday, we are called to relationships that stretch beyond blood, to care for one another and the world.

We are called to live in relationships that seek justice, love kindness and ground us in your love.

Go now in peace to love and serve the Lord and the world in which we live.

**GO NOW IN PEACE:** Faith video (link takes you to Youtube)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdUap5fcp4k>