

Sermon framing for May 9, 2010

Lectons for Easter 6: Acts 16:9-15; Ps. 67; Rev. 21:10, 22-22:5; Jn 14:23-29

Mother's Day

Blocked by the Spirit from going where he intended, Paul responds to a vision to go where help is needed in Macedonia. His usual habit was to go to the synagogue and teach about Jesus but in this scene from Acts we find him going to a place of prayer outside the city; in fact it is the gathering place of faithful women who he joins. Lydia is singled out as a model disciple: she hears Paul tell the story, she is baptized and then opens her home in hospitality to others. We will learn later that when Paul is released from prison, he goes to her home in Phillippi. As the head of a household, a working woman, Lydia is one example of mother in faith....

Pat Gill

I have life, thanks to an unsuccessful abortion attempt, which will tell you what state of mind my birth mother was in at that time. When I was 50 years old I met her for the first time and we developed a friendship during her latter days.

Fortunately, within a few days of my birth, I was matched with a couple who wanted me as much as I needed a good family. My first recollection of my mother was of her singing me to sleep with a lullaby - in Welsh - her native tongue, she always insisted that she couldn't sing well, but I found her voice melodic and soothing and it always had the desired effect.

My father was an Anglican priest, and I must say that I was raised by my mother - I was her child- my father's child was the parish! Being adopted, there was no genetic match, so the God given talents which both my parents had, good scholarship, athleticism, musical ability, were all missing in me, but my wise mother got over this disappointment and allowed me to hone my own gifts.

In my family, Father spoke, mostly on Sundays, and mother acted. She was a generous hearted soul, she welcomed strangers and those who found themselves marginalised, ours was home to three teenage evacuees from the London blitz, she never turned anyone away from our door, she fed tramps and migrant workers and often left our garden shed door open to allow some stranger to sleep in a dry place. She had her own meals on wheels, she cooked - I delivered on my bicycle.

Her style of discipline was very old fashioned, she would give me the "silent treatment" and when pushed to the limit, would threaten to give me to the gypsies the next time they called - which was often -we had hundreds of wooden clothes pins which they "sold" often in exchange for food, as they were not usually welcome in grocery stores. By her willingness to recognize these people who were on the fringes of society, she legitimized their existence, which was no surprise, since she had legitimized me at a time when being illegitimate was a very shameful state to be in.

She loved me as no other person could, she comforted me when I was bullied; in her "soft" moments, she would say "You mean all the world to me" which, looking back is wonderful, but as a child it was rather overwhelming.

Her love was shown in very practical ways and could have even been beyond the law. As a teenager I drove home one day with blood on the front of my car - Mum rushed out with a bucket of water and a rag, shouting "Tell me what happened later, I'll destroy the evidence first" I had had a collision with a nice plump pheasant, which we enjoyed the next day.....but you get the picture.

Mother supported me even when she didn't quite agree with my plans, she was patient, she listened, she encouraged, she taught, she comforted, she never let me down and she never scolded me in front of other people, Her generous nature extended to my friends, many of whom she kept in contact with, after I had lost touch with them.

There was NOTHING I could do which would stop her loving me - and she showed that love in many ways, some of which I have mentioned.,

I wish everyone could have a mother like mine.

She was full of the gifts of the Spirit.

Doug Drew

“ When Linda asked me to do this, I wondered what I could say. I wrote something up and have been adding to it ever since, right up to 5 minutes ago (see references to Lydia and Paul, re earlier scripture readings).”

MOTHER,,, MOM ,,A.K.A. ---- Edith Margaret (Kennedy) Drew

I feel that I should start this wearing a Stove Pipe Hat, and a beard.

My mother was born on a farm, in what is now Orleans, in an honest to Betsy log house. The eldest daughter in a family of 7 children. Staunch Scottish and Irish roots. Presbyterian upbringing since her father was a Lay preacher as well as a farmer and harness-maker. They were not permitted to laugh on the Sabbath

She had only grade school education but was able to self teach herself the high school things she'd need to know, since her older brothers had bought her the books before it was decided she should stay and help at home. She eventually attended Business College and worked in Ottawa as a Civil Servant..

She married my father one Friday, after work then went “home” by trolley car, or whatever passed for that back then, while Pop went “home” on his bicycle balancing a cake on the handlebars.

She had 2 daughters before she got lucky with me.

She was well known for her excellent, beautiful needlework; knitting, tatting, quilting, crochet etc. You name it, she did it. 1 Christmas, when I was already a married man, there were 24 Bulky Knit sweaters under the tree ranging, in size, from age two to 52..

And her Fair Isle sweaters were some of the most beautiful ever.

She had as green a thumb as could be. Some folk were known to bring her dying plants and she'd nurse them back to health. They didn't dare to die under her care. And if you admired one of her house plants, you probably went home with it.

I guess I remember best WW 11 when she, (like Lydia) with a little help from Pop, though he was away a lot of the time with the Air Force, when our house became a home away from home for Air Force and Army girls and even the odd Wren too. We had some of them as roomers and any number more as weekend visitors. The Western and Atlantic Provinces were just too far distant for a weekend pass..

Hey, (like Paul) I was the only male, all-be-it 10 thru 12 years old,, in this house full of good looking women;;; I had a ball ! Each Christmas day would see a couple more new girls added from the local barracks, and you know, even Santa knew they were visiting with us and had a wee gift with their name on it beneath the tree. I remember 1 Christmas with 13 non-family at the dinner table.

A number of years ago, my late wife asked Mom how she had coped with "the change of life" as it was called then. Mom thought for a moment then replied " that happened during the war,,, and I guess I was just too darn busy to notice it".

Mom was a wonderful cook and even with wartime rationing, no-one ever went hungry. I remember a childhood neighbour writing, at the time of Moms' death, that she always loved to visit in our house for the wonderful aromas coming from the kitchen.

Mom lived in her house until her death at age 90. Still with all her faculties, still sharp as a tack, and a memory to be envied.

She was a very dedicated church-goer, and W.A. worker for as long as she was able, then relied on, Dr.Shuller on TV for much of her churching. I was so happy that she had a pastoral visit, with communion, just a week or two before she died.

I don't think I ever heard her say a bad thing about anyone, She could always figure a reason why "they" had maybe done a wrong. She was very forgiving.

Just after her death we came across a poem, written on the back of an envelope. We think she wrote it; It's sort of a lament of old folks and at the same time some happy remembrances: I've shared it with a number of friends including some in this church, I'd like to share it with you.

One by one our friends pass on
A brief sojourn and then they're gone.
In life we shared their joys and laughter,
Wept with them in their sorrow and pain
Trusting, in the great hereafter
We will someday meet again.

She had so many friends she looked forward to meeting again.

She taught me that trust; not by any preaching, but just by the way she lived and the way she loved God and admired all his wonderful works. And the Golden Rule ???,,,, I think it was her watchword. She sure practiced it.

She's gone 23 years now. I miss her

Ericka

I find it difficult to get behind mother's day. Don't get me wrong, I love my mom, and am thankful for all the things she's done to make me the person I am today. But, I find it difficult to get behind a holiday that has been co-opted by card companies, florists and brunch restaurants. It's also made difficult by the fact that my mom lives in BC, and Andrew's mom is 6 hours away in southern Ontario.

Given that she's so far away, my reflections this week about my mom, and mother's day, naturally led me to consider the other "moms" I have in my life.

These are women – both younger and older than me – who have come alongside me to teach me skills, to provide me with a shoulder to cry on, or to simply have a conversation. These are women who open their lives and welcome me in. These are women who are involved in their communities. These women provide their advice and opinions, but aren't pushy and are open to discussions.

My mom is certainly one of these women.

But so are aunts, my mother-in-law, and my God-mom.

So is my sister.

So are close friends.

This is my mother's day reflection about my many mothers.

My many mothers mold me.

Tell me,

Come sit on my lap,

I'll rock you.

Sleep or don't sleep,

Breath

Closed eyes.

Love.

Love is: fresh laundry, old rocking chairs, tears, deep breaths,

My many mothers mold me.

Show me how:

Bake bread and buns,

Mix cookies,

Squares

Make pie,

Casserole,
Borscht for thousands.
Love.

Love is: bread rising, cloves, cinnamon, dill, lemon pepper, peeled carrots, melting butter, side-by-side work in the kitchen, setting the table, welcoming guests. Being home.

Food is comfort,
Nourishment for tired minds and bodies
Love is comfort,
Nourishment for tired minds and bodies

My many mothers mold me.
Show me how
Slow down.
Sit.
Be still.
Rest.
It's time to listen.
Love.

Love is: care, hope, laughter, respite, tea with milk and honey, take cookies home, and come back soon.

My many mothers mold me.
Show me how,
 Dig deep,
Plant flowers,
Grow vegetables,
Water them,
Tend to them,
Let them take root.
Love.

Love is: cut grass, chives, dirt, fresh basil, lilies, lilacs in spring, roses, sweat, running through sprinklers, laughter, talking on the steps.

My many mothers mold me,
Show me how
To take root
You take root,
And I'll take root too.
(Love makes) families,

(Love makes) neighbours.
In Community.

In John's gospel we are offered an interweaving that binds us all together in love. Jesus is about to leave –there will be grief, fear, anxiety and troubled hearts. Some of us who have lost our mothers, some who never were mothers, some who wished they had mothers other than the ones they were given, can find hope in the promise of new relationships. Jesus tells his friends that they will be caught up in the relationship he enjoys with God – if you have seen me, you have seen the father – now with the promise of the Spirit, teaching and reminding. The continual challenge in the face of everything is to trust God and the confidence of Jesus' relationship. All of us are caught up in this new reality of a relationship of care – men as well as women – as the human family of God. This is a day for all of us, carried into the next stage of love.

Amen+

The Rev. Dr. Linda Privitera