

FROM A MOTHER'S HEART TO YOURS...

2024

During a conversation I had with a friend one day, the topic turned to the most well-known and influential people we've ever heard of, whether they were alive or not. At some point, I finally asked her this hypothetical question: "Of all those people, is there someone in particular you wish you had met or would like to meet someday?" After thinking about it for a moment, she replied, "None of them, really... But, I wish I had met Mary, the mother of Jesus!" Intrigued, I asked her why. She said, "Well, I'd like to know how she felt as a mother to have raised a son like Jesus!"

I have to admit that the story of Mary is quite compelling. As the Bible tells us, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." But Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; for that reason also the holy Child will be called the Son of God. Mary then said, "I am the servant of the Lord. Let this happen to me as you say!" And the angel went away. (Luke 1:26-33, 38)

As we read this amazing story, it's evident that God entrusted Mary with a very special mission. However, as she carried Jesus in her womb, was she fully aware of what would ultimately happen to this exceptional child as he grows up into adulthood? Did she realize what she would have to go through as his mother?

The day Mary and her husband, Joseph, went to the temple to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, Simeon, a just and righteous man was there. God had promised him that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah. Therefore, when he saw them, he took the baby in his arms, praised God for having fulfilled His promise to him, and said to Mary, "This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul." (Luke 2:22-35) I can only imagine how she must have felt hearing those words...

Mary must have been heartbroken as she witnessed her adult son endure so much adversity. The rejection he took from his own people, the opposition and false accusations coming from the religious leaders, the excruciating pain and suffering he endured at the hands of merciless soldiers; not to mention the unspeakable sadness she must have felt while she watched him hanging on a cross in total agony. Evidently, God gave her the grace, strength, and courage to complete her mission to the end...

Mary had a special calling on her life, which brought some unique challenges as well. However, she also had the extraordinary privilege and joy of giving birth, and raising a child who is the Savior of the world. He was born without sin, had the power to cast out demons, and forgive sinners. He performed miracles and transformed the lives of a multitude of people. He rose from the grave and ascended to heaven. Evidently, because of Mary's special mission, we can't compare our own lives with hers. However, as mothers, we also have our share of challenges as we strive to do our best raising our own children, don't we?

Before we even began our journey into motherhood, did we understand how drastically our lives were about to change? Did we realize how challenging it would be? Did we know everything about how to raise a kid, and how our child would turn out to be in life? None of us could predict the outcome of it all...

However, despite all of the unknowns, a majority of us embarked with great enthusiasm on this new adventure of a lifetime. I was one of them!

At some point, however, the reality of it all may have crept up on us... We may have felt overwhelmed, and so exhausted with the constant demands and the needs of a newborn baby, that the thought of going, *alone*, on a remote island, and hide there for a while seemed quite appealing! Are there any mothers who haven't felt this way at some point? Fortunately, these feelings are normally short lived, and we realize how blessed we are to have given birth to the most beautiful baby in the world!

No doubt, as we continue raising our children, the responsibilities and challenges can become overwhelming at times. I admit it's not always easy... We invest a few years of our lives guiding them to become responsible, loving, caring and godly men and women who, hopefully, will make a difference in the lives of people around them.

Most of us can agree that our children are a source of wonderful blessings in our lives. Little drawings and notes with an 'I Love You, Mom!' a 'Thank You, Mom!' or an unexpected hug we get from them prove their affection towards us, and lift our spirits up especially when we need it the most. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22:6) This Proverb always encouraged me to keep up the good work, and to trust God in all things concerning my children. And as we leave them in God's hands, we also come to realize that the time and effort we put in raising them is never in vain...

My days as a hectic young mother ended years ago. However, I have to say that this particular season of my life was the most fulfilling, and exciting adventure I've ever experienced. However, at this time, I'm content simply watching my dear sons and their wives raise their own families, and being a grandmother to six wonderful grandchildren!

As we celebrate Mother's Day, I want to pay tribute to all the mothers who consistently and selflessly give of themselves for the wellbeing of their families. I also want to recognize the women who are especially dear to my heart. Those who wish to become pregnant, but cannot because of health issues. Mothers who are raising children with special needs. Single mothers who have no other choice but to raise their children on their own, as well as the ones who have lost a son, a daughter or perhaps both... All I can say to you, dear moms, is that since I've never been in your shoes, I can't understand what you're really going through. However, I truly sympathize with you, and pray God to surround you with His love and peace. May He give you strength and hope as you go through these challenging times in your lives.

I also wish to acknowledge mothers who have finished raising their families. For many years, you have invested a lot of time and effort into your children's lives, and you're most likely enjoying the current stage of your life. No matter how you've reacted to this change, they will always remain in your hearts. Once a mother, always a mother... Some of you may already be grandmothers, playing a positive and important role in the lives of your grandchildren. May the love and affection shown you on Mother's Day by your children, and grandchildren bless you richly as you've blessed them over the years.

However, if Mother's Day is particularly difficult and emotional for some of you, I pray that God will heal any broken hearts; that He will bless you in a very special way, and give you peace and hope...

To all... Have a blessed and wonderful Mother's Day!

With love,

Beth☺