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Fearless Mother's Day

By Elise L. Moore

What a wonderful commandment: "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Ex. 20:12).

Mother's Day is a good time to remember that adults, too, have opportunities to honor their parents. One way is to express gratitude. Gratitude for their sincere efforts. Gratitude for their guidance and encouragement. Gratitude for their patience and perseverance. Opening our heart to gratitude blesses us as well as our parents, and can start us down the path of healing any hurtful memories.

Another way is to encourage our mothers and fathers as they might have encouraged us. When we were little, perhaps we were afraid of the dark and our mother or father helped us overcome that fear. Sometimes in later years mothers and fathers need the same kind of loving support. Instead of being afraid for them or justifying their fears, we can help them challenge fear and regain their independence and dignity.

A few years ago, it occurred to me that my widowed mother was no longer driving at night. As tactfully as possible, I inquired. She said she had been chased by a car full of teenagers. On another occasion a car had followed her all the way to her house. She had escaped by using her automatic garage door opener. Women did not belong driving on the streets alone at night, she observed. The evening news was full of accounts of violence against older folks.

She had stopped going to church on Wednesday nights. Stopped going out to dinner with friends. Stopped going to evening shows - all because of an escalating fear.

As she talked, I prayed. Accepting fear is never a solution. One of the first steps in healing is to overcome fear. Jesus frequently instructed his patients not to fear. So I prayed to know how to help my mother master this fear.

God speaks to each one of us twenty-four hours a day, providing just the right messages to meet our needs. So my prayer was a moment of turning thought to our heavenly Father-Mother, listening for the right thought to share with my mother.

Inspiration came in the words of a hymn that is very familiar to her. I asked if she knew the “driving” hymn. Silence. She hadn't a clue what I was talking about. Then I read her this hymn, substituting the word *drive* where *walk* appears. You can do the same for the first and last verses:

I walk with Love along the way,
And O, it is a holy day;
No more I suffer cruel fear,
I feel God's presence with me here;
The joy that none can take away
Is mine; I walk with Love today.

Come, walk with Love along the way,
Let childlike trust be yours today;
Uplift your thought, with courage go,
give of your heart's rich overflow,
And peace shall crown your joy-filled day (night).
Come, walk with Love along the way.
(*Christian Science Hymnal, No. 139*)

My mother's fear was healed right then. She resumed driving at night, going to church, meeting with friends, and singing the “driving” hymn. She also shared this thought with other women who were losing their independence because of their fear of driving at night.

This Mother's Day, why not honor our mother by expressing gratitude for her goodness. Let's not be afraid for our parents or limit their ability. Instead, let's pray to hear God's guidance and help to master fear.