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A mother's rebirth

By Elise L. Moore, CSB

MOTHER'S DAY is a time to show appreciation for those who have cared and sacrificed for us. Every Mom deserves a call or a card. Whether your relationship is close or strained, seeing the good in your mother will bless you as much as it does her.

Some mothers make it easy. They radiate patience, grace, encouragement. When their children make mistakes, they are rarely critical. They don't place blame. They're not embarrassed by problems. They may pray for wisdom, for courage, for God's guidance both for themselves and their family. Maintaining a loving, affectionate relationship, they forgive and forget. Lavish with praise, stingy with criticism, such mothers are usually cherished by their children.

Some women are uneasy with motherhood. Perhaps they never wanted to be a mother. It just happened. Frustration, resentment, obligation cause a stoic, critical approach. Yet Mother's Day is a wonderful time for a fresh start. Why not make it a new birth for you, as a mother?

Jesus taught about a new birth, a spiritual birth that leaves old ways behind. While he was speaking to Nicodemus, his words opened a whole new view of motherhood. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Jesus wasn't talking about going through a material birthing process. It was a spiritual re-generation. So who is the "mother" in this rebirth? Isn't the Mother in our spiritual birth God? Jesus said we are reborn of Spirit. Spirit is God. So this new view of motherhood begins with acknowledging God, Spirit, as the Mother of all, and of our children.

God is their true Mom and our permanent Mom. God has always wanted each child. No child is unexpected to infinite Love. And God creates each child a blessing, not a burden. God isn't disappointed with any of Her

children. If they make mistakes, She corrects through love and pours peace and comfort into the famished affections.

If we make mistakes, our divine Mother forgives us. And Jesus taught us to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Or as Mary Baker Eddy noted, "... Love is reflected in love" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, pg. 17). Opening ourselves to forgiving our children and loving them more gives us new life in a spiritual sense of motherhood.

The result is a willingness to praise children without thinking praise will spoil them. To express approval of their efforts even though they don't meet our expectations. To show them that enjoying life and having fun are as important as hard work. As we reflect more of God's affection, aloofness, harshness, and criticism fade away.

In this new day in our mothering, what if we resolved to forgive and forget one fault of each child? Spiritual mothering includes forgiveness. What if we made it a project to forgive and forget a fault each day? Another aspect of heavenly mothering is seeing goodness.

Perhaps we could make a list of 10 good qualities that each of our children expresses. What a joy to see how good they really are! If good qualities seem in short supply, then we could pray to see one good quality and know that they have it, no matter what.

Early in my life as a stepmother, I saw that I needed a more spiritual approach. Never having been a mother, I was doing my best. But it was trial and error, with emphasis on the error. One afternoon, I realized I needed a total transformation in my point of view. It had turned way too negative.

At first I began to pray that the kids would change. Then it dawned on me to think of the good qualities these boys expressed. Instead of thinking of them critically, I began to mentally praise them. I stopped thinking of them as another mother's kids or my own, but thought of them as God's. It was easy to accept that God's sons would be appreciative, kind to each other, honest. I was still praying when one son came home from school. As he passed my room, he stopped only long enough to thank me for something I'd done and say he really appreciated it. I was amazed! The spiritual approach to mothering really worked!

This Mother's Day is your day to let go of the past and claim God as your Mother, and your children's Mother. May it be a day full of happiness, and may you feel mothered by your heavenly Mother.