

## Bringing Justice and Peace to Birth—Message for 10 May 2015

Greeting: We are all the parents of a new birth of Spirit—let us be midwives to the Inner Guide and bring new Life and Light into the world. To bravely face the pain and risk, the labor of discerning and articulating deep truths, and then to nurture those messages so that they grow and flourish, yet another generation of testimony. Faith compels reiteration.

First hymn: green book no. 98 “O Young and Fearless Prophet”

Julia Ward Howe in 1870, in response to the extreme violence of the Franco-Prussian war, led a movement for a Mothers Day for Peace with this appeal, known since 1872 as the Mother’s Day Proclamation: “Again, in the sight of the Christian world, have the skill and power of two great nations exhausted themselves in mutual murder. Again have the sacred questions of international justice been committed to the fatal mediation of military weapons. In this day of progress, in this century of light, the ambition of rulers has been allowed to barter the dear interests of domestic life for the bloody exchanges of the battle field. Thus men have done. Thus men will do. But women need no longer be made a party to proceedings which fill the globe with grief and horror. Despite the assumptions of physical force, the mother has a sacred and commanding word to say to the sons who owe their life to her suffering. That word should now be heard, and answered to as never before.

Arise, then, Christian women of this day ! Arise, all women who have hearts, Whether your baptism be that of water or of tears ! Say firmly : We will not have great questions decided by irrelevant agencies. Our husbands shall not come to us, reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause. Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy and patience. We, women of one

country, will be too tender of those of another country, to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs. From the bosom of the devastated earth a voice goes up with our own. It says: Disarm, disarm! The sword of murder is not the balance of justice. Blood does not wipe out dishonor, nor violence vindicate possession. As men have often forsaken the plough and the anvil at the summons of war, let women now leave all that may be left of home for a great and earnest day of council. Let them meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead. Let them then solemnly take council with each other as to the means whereby the great human family can live in peace, man as the brother of man, each bearing after his own kind the sacred impress, not of Caesar, but of God. In the name of womanhood and of humanity, I earnestly ask that a general congress of women, without limit of nationality, may be appointed and held at some place deemed most convenient, and at the earliest period consistent with its objects, to promote the alliance of the different nationalities, the amicable settlement of international questions, the great and general interests of peace.”

The Second Reading is from Luke 8:19-21 and Mark 3:31-35 and Matthew 12: 46-50.

“Now Jesus’ mother and brothers came to see him, but they were not able to get near him because of the crowd. Someone told him, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you.” He replied, “My mother and brothers are those who hear God’s word and put it into practice.”

Then Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.” “Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him

and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

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."

Second hymn no. 131 in the green book "Christ, Thou Word of God Once Spoken"

Joys and Concerns---then music interlude

We ask the power of Love in this universe to lift from us the fear of others. Let us see our mothers, siblings, and children all around us—in those we see and learn about. As we sang in our opening hymn, help us rise above the nation and the boundaries of the mind to the neighborhood of all. Graft our branches to the true vine and bring us to foster and adopt the ways of justice and peace with one another. We think of the motherless child, those who are abandoned, perhaps not alone, but unable to belong, either from the pain of their own or others limitations, or the cruel circumstances of disconnected lives. Let us be the true family members Jesus found in those who came close to him. Amen

Third hymn is in the green book no 107 "When Jesus Walked Upon the Earth"

Children may now head downstairs for time with each other, to nurture each other with lessons and play in community.

Dear Friends--So, the very greatest ones are those who love the most. And in some sense, loving the most could mean loving those who are more difficult to love, just as it can also mean loving the greatest number, or loving those close to us the most strongly or deeply. Our hymns and readings today take all of these views. The idea that the depth of mother love can be a source of empathic power to end all violence is one that sits behind the movement for a Mother's Day for Peace. It was not only Julia Ward Howe, but her contemporary, Ann Jarvis, who sought to mobilize mothers to reconcile during the Civil War and after. Her daughter, Anna Jarvis, finally achieved the actual official recognition of the day, but by then (1914) saying it was in honor of her own mother, and leaving out the overt appeal to peace and justice.

This year, 2015, Valerie Bell, the mother of Sean Bell, a young African American man shot dead by New York City police on the evening of his bachelor's party in 2006, has put out a call:

"This year we are taking back the original intention of Mother's Day: a day founded for mothers to stand up together to make collective demands... It's now a century after the founding of Mothers Day, and our sons are still being taken from us. Society has not disarmed, but instead has [militarized to the teeth](#). Mothers' sons everywhere are still killing and being killed. We have had enough...."

"This Mother's Day, let's come together to demand an end to this cycle of violence, this society of institutionalized racism and police militarization. We are healers, teachers, caretakers, givers of life, and so much more. Mothers are powerful; if we come together, we can be unstoppable. That's why, on May 8th, [I am traveling to Washington DC](#) to stand with other grieving

mothers to call for an end to the killing and to say: “Disarm, disarm!”

As we witness this witness of maternal love in search for an end to violence, we also go deep for that Light and to live in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars and strife. Three of the Gospels in our reading today repeat Christ’s statement that those within the Light—the inner light in all people—are all mothers, brothers, and sisters to every one of us. The fear that fuels violence, fear of each other, and the desperation that can lead people to fearful acts, are all overcome with love. There are not many quotations of Christ that are repeated in three of the Gospels. We are used to the idea of being Friends, even of being brothers and sisters, but Christ calls us to be mothers to each other as well.

Can we continue to birth this new society? To nurture and foster and adopt one another? How far over the horizon are we to making it real? The love within our biological families is just a small beginning, a base from which to extend the necessary love to the unloved places and people of our small earth. Fear and violence are powerful forces, but we have known experientially, as Friends, a force more powerful. It is from love that justice and peace can flow. As many mothers have known, let us see what love can do. This is a call to all the mothers in this room, as Jesus stated, that being all of us.

Closing Hymn is on the handout “Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service”.

Closing: On this mother’s day for peace, let us look across the generations and see our extended family. Love is the power of peace and life that sends us forth, forevermore.

Thanks/Introductions/Announcements/Afterthoughts

Postlude