

Is motherhood a worthy career?

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On the second day in May each year, Australians celebrate Mother's Day. Throughout the country, children of all ages remember the special part their mothers play in nurturing and caring for them. Little ones show their appreciation by giving Mum her breakfast in bed. Adults visit and may give a gift or a bunch of white chrysanthemums. Many churches mark this day by holding services that commemorate the role of motherhood.

However, while mothering is acknowledged in this way, there is still a lingering perception that raising children is not an important job – not when compared to other professions. Why is this? What would deny the worth of rearing children? Perhaps it has something to do with how this work is viewed.

Some people see it as a woman's job that isn't prestigious or significant. Others see it as unpaid, unskilled work that doesn't contribute to a country's gross national product. As a result, individuals, employers, and governments sometimes do or say things that don't appear to value parenting.

Despite this, there is another view of motherhood that establishes and sustains the ability and worth of this activity. It is the spiritual view.

The Bible tells us that God is Love. How comforting it is to know that divine Love mothers, cares for, and safeguards each of us. The beautiful imagery of Deuteronomy tells us of God's mothering presence: "The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him" (32:9-12).

This is a powerful but tender reminder that divine Love never forgets or neglects us. Omnipresent Love maintains and preserves our health and well-being always. God's mothering is constant, pure, and wholly good. God would never abandon or desert us. We are His precious children, forever cherished and dear to Him.

True motherhood is the reflection of God. It mirrors the gentleness of Love's attention and sheltering warmth. It images forth Love's genuine interest and wholehearted delight in its offspring. It also demonstrates the unfailing strength of Love's support and protection. This is why mothering is so important and why it is worthy of our highest regard.

I learned this while living far away from home for the first time. Feeling desperately homesick and cut off from my mother's love and encouragement, I felt deeply unhappy. There was no way that I could go to her, and she couldn't come to me. What was I to do? Eventually it occurred to me that I needed to pray. I had to see that since God is my Father-Mother, I could never be separated from a sense of mother love. I could feel mothered, cared for, and loved right there and then. God's love is ever present, and I could expect to find it expressed wherever I lived. That's just what happened. At different times several women took me under their wings and mothered me. In their love I saw God's motherhood reflected and felt great joy. All homesickness and loneliness fled, and I never again felt cut off from affectionate caring.

Nothing is more important to God than treasuring and caring for each of His beloved offspring. He never stops mothering and fathering us. As our divine Parent, he is always faithful, diligent, conscientious, devoted, and committed. How could all-encompassing Love be otherwise? Pure mothering is the expression of unfaltering Love that dries tears, comforts us in times of trouble, and restores lost hope and confidence. Harshness, brusqueness, or aggression never removes fear or sorrow. Angry or violent actions are never Love's way. These are the very opposite of heartfelt mothering.

So what can we do when anger or frustration threatens the valuable work of raising our young? We can reject the notion that parenting is a mundane, insignificant, and worthless activity. The knowledge that expressing God in raising children is doing something of consequence helps us respect this work. We perform our role from the understanding that what we do is highly prized and valued. This sweeps away resentment and brings us peace.

In a time when violence seems widespread and a lack of humanity is often evident, there is a great need for the calmness of mothering qualities to be expressed in families and the world.

As the image of our Father-Mother, we can fully express both male and female qualities in caring for our family. Each of us can be strong and tender, as well as vigilant and mindful. We can be kindhearted and affectionate, as well as firm and consistent.

Expressing God's Mother-love is such important work. It's a worthy career for both men and women.