

“EVERYTHING AND NOTHING”

[Happy Mother’s Day! - to all mothers and women, who look after, care for, protect, or tend to children and others.]

There you are inside...you’re on your way.
I’m more and more excited and scared every day.
Everything is so different and changed.
Life as I’ve known it – all rearranged.

You stretch and wiggle and move as you grow,
My belly gets bigger, my face stays aglow.
You’re a strong little [one] – your [...] muscles show
You cracked mommy’s rib just a few days ago.

Daddy’s changing too – he’s as proud as he can be,
He’s so attentive to mommy’s every want and need.
Rubbing my belly, he talks to you every night.
He comes to every appointment to make sure you are all right.

The doc said “it’s a girl” but didn’t write it in ink.
We assumed he was right and got lots and lots of pink.
We went in for a 3-D, found a [surprise], “[Could it be a boy?]”
Our faces in shock, but our hearts full of joy.

I’ve fallen in love with your [adorable] little face –
I show off your pictures all over the place!
On stamps, on invitations, to every one I meet.
You look just like your daddy with your chubby little cheeks!

There’s so much inside me and everything’s new...
New thoughts, new fears, new emotions, and you!
I already love you like I’ve never felt before,
I wonder how there could possibly be room for more.

Can I teach you respect, show you love, make you strong?
Will you know in an instant that this is where you belong?
You’ll teach me patience, show me strength, make me grow –
I’ll learn from you everyday – you lead and I’ll follow.

I have so many worries as we prepare,
Our pockets are empty but we’ll make it – I swear.
Can I be a good mother? Will you be okay?
I promise you EVERYTHING...and NOTHING will stand in my way.
[Toni, www.familyfriendpoems.com/family/poetry.asp?poem=19604]

In the chaotic world of a first time mother, who is 28 weeks pregnant, and scared to death; who deals daily with various feelings of wonder and amazement, and of excitement and terror – she tries to convey a moment of assurance, of love and **of peace**, to her unborn child.

This gesture, of instilling peace into her environment, her situation, her new life within her, conforms to an ancient Mayan saying: “I am you and you are me. What I do to you I do to myself.” This mother is expressing the sentiment of peace, which is required for respect and development of human life.

Dr. Martin Luther King was quoted in the 1960’s, “In a real sense all life is inter-related. All persons are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all directly...we are all links in the great chain of humanity. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the inter-related structure of reality. We have before us the glorious opportunity to inject a new dimension of love into the veins of our civilization.”

Our Church tells us that “Peace cannot be attained on earth without safeguarding the goods of persons, free communication among men, respect for the dignity of persons and peoples, and the [nonstop] practice of fraternity.” “[We] must freely and trustingly share with one another the riches of [our] minds and [our] talents.”

In today’s Gospel reading, Jesus spoke about peace during the Last Supper. He said to the apostles, ‘Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. A peace which the world cannot give, this is my gift to you. So do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.’

It was a strange time to talk about peace, because everything was in turmoil around him. How then was he able to talk about peace?

Because, peace is communion, with God.

And Jesus was in perfect communion with God. So he was able to talk about peace even as his enemies were closing in on him and death was just around the corner.

As reconciled people to God, as unified people in the one body of Christ, we are obligated to speak the truth in love, and to join with all peace-loving persons in pleading for peace and trying to bring it about.

You may recall that soon after the September 11th terrorist attacks and the seemingly endless conflicts in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and elsewhere, Pope John Paul II, intervened in a “Day of Prayer for Peace in the World at Assisi” on January 24 2002. The pope had invited participants, including representatives from Orthodox Christian churches, Anglican and Protestant communities, Islamic leaders, rabbis, as well as representatives from Buddhism, Hinduism, traditional African religions and others.

The leaders traveled with the Pope on what was called by the press the “peace train” to Assisi. Once there, the religious leaders reflected on peace together and then prayed for peace separately throughout the city according to their own creeds. Later in the day, they gathered together to make a common commitment to promoting peace and teaching their faithful that violence and terrorism are incompatible with the faith and beliefs of all the world’s religions.

But peace is more than the absence of war and violence. Peace is not the same as tranquility. Tranquility is external. Peace is essentially internal. Peace is a state of inner calm and designates right

relations with God and with others. An essential component of peace is righteousness. There is no peace for the wicked.

Peace results when one trusts in God, and when the desire to please him is the dominant thing in one's life. This is something which we can have even in the midst of turmoil, conflict and unresolved problems. Peace is the gift of forgiveness, of redemption and of the new creation; as are love, joy, self control, kindness and gentleness.

Jesus offers his peace to us: "Peace I leave with you." The peace he offers us is not the peace of escape from reality. It is something so deep it is independent of outer circumstances. It is peace which passes all understanding, the peace which this world cannot give, a peace no one can take away from us.

Jesus came to show us the Kingdom of God. **The kingdom of God is justice, peace and joy in the Spirit.** [Rom 14:17], which brings us to today's second reading. The holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, surely stands for the catholicity, the universality of the Church and for the continuity of the Church. The God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament. The symbolism, of the three gates on each of the four sides of the city of God, has been beautifully and comfortingly interpreted to represent when and how we enter this city of peace.

The east is the place of the rising sun and the beginning of the day. The three gates on the east wall could represent the way into the holy city of those who find Christ in the glad morning of their lives.

The west is the land of the dying day and the setting sun. These three gates on the west wall could stand for the way into the holy city of those who come to Christ in the evening of their lives.

The north is the cold land with a certain chill in it. These three gates on the north wall could stand for the way into the holy city of those who come to Christ by their intellectual exercise of thought, and have found the faith through the minds rather than through their hearts.

The south is the warm land, where the wind is gentle and the climate soft. These three gates on the south wall could stand for the way into the holy city of those who come to Christ through their emotions, whose love ran over at the sight of the cross.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God." Yes, blessed are the mothers and women, who look after, care for, protect, or tend to children and others; for by their love and sacrifices, they have promised us **EVERYTHING**, including peace...and **NOTHING**, stood in their way, to bring us to the gates of the holy city of God.