

# **FAITHFUL WORDS MEDITATION: ON BLESSING**

## ***The Invisible Blessings of Mothers***

*by Karen Hering*

*Delivered at Unity Church-Unitarian*

*St. Paul, Minnesota*

*Mother's Day: May 10, 2009*

*In honor of my mother, Carol Hering*

When I was growing up, my mother sewed all of my favorite clothes – carefully cutting the unrecognizable shapes out of fabric I had chosen, and then, with a skill I took entirely for granted at the time, she transformed those odd pieces into finished garments exactly my size and joined entirely by stitches invisible to the eye.

On Mother's Day, I think with deep gratitude about the way that so many mothers – of our birth and those of our own choosing – engage in “the invisible work that stitches up the world day and night.”<sup>1</sup> I think about all the slipstitches of love with which my own mother invisibly pulled one part of my life together with another, how she patiently mended whatever a day's adventures might have torn or worn thin, and how she taught me to see what could be made from a few small pieces, a pattern, a little imagination and a lot of thread and patience and time. Is this not all a form of blessing?

A blessing, like a good mother, provides a safe space for us to grow into ourselves. A blessing, like a good mother, hauls our “hidden wholeness” out into the light of day where we can see it and believe in it even in our most fractured moments. A blessing, like a good mother, reminds us who we are inside and who we might wish to become.

On Mother's Day, I also think of Julia Ward Howe, the 19<sup>th</sup> century Unitarian who penned the first proclamation of International Mother's Day in 1870. This proclamation, too, is a kind of blessing. Recognizing the wholeness of our humanity, as she did, and the old, strong threads of motherhood that pull us all together, she called upon women everywhere to join in a clear and fierce pledge to create and support world peace.

*Arise, then, she said, . . . all women who have hearts,  
Whether your baptism be that of water or of tears  
Say firmly: “Our husbands shall not come to us reeking of carnage,*

---

<sup>1</sup> From Alison Luterman's poem “Invisible Work,” from Alison Luterman, *The Largest Possible Life*, (Cleveland, OH: Cleveland State University Poetry Center, 2001), 17.

*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, she declared, will be too tender of those of another country To allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs. . . ."*

*Let women now (join in) a great and earnest day of counsel . . . with each other as to the means whereby the great human family can live in peace, Each bearing after his own time the sacred impress, not of Caesar, but of God. . . .<sup>2</sup>*

Would we not welcome this blessing today – bringing together women from all nations and all faiths and reminding us that we are all – women and men and children – part of a larger human family aspiring toward peace?

May it be so, on this Mother's Day and in the days to come. May we join our voices together as one mother with another, pledging to create a more peaceful way for our children. May we see in *each* member of the human family "the sacred impress." And may the example we give our children be one of both tenderness and strength. So may we all stitch up the world, day and night, carrying on the invisible but powerful work of peace with the invisible but powerful forces of love.

#####

Delivered at Unity Church-Unitarian  
St. Paul, MN  
May 10, 2009  
Copyright Karen Hering  
karen@unityunitarian.org

---

<sup>2</sup> The complete proclamation is available at numerous websites including:  
<http://www.chiff.com/a/mothers-day-origins.htm>