



May 2023

Dear CWR/PTM Friend and Partner,

We all have an intimate relationship with mothers—we are sons and daughters of mothers and grandchildren of grandmothers. We are husbands whose wives were/are mothers. We are parents of daughters and even granddaughters, some of whom are themselves mothers.

Breaking news! Remember, you heard it here first!! It's obvious, I know, but for the record, let's remember we all had a mother. Some are blessed to still have a living mother... if you do, take advantage of the time you have with her. Many of you are mothers, may you hear and know that you are cherished and loved by your children.

Mothers are the first revelation of God and his love to us. **God has a “mother-side.”** Mothers are often the first way in which infants see and feel love exemplified—it is often through their mothers that children first receive love, mercy and grace. In mothers we often see our first and sometimes most profound example of self-sacrifice and service. *In and through mothers we are more likely to experience what unconditional love means, and how it is defined and how we realize it.*

As our hearts are particularly inspired by the love, comfort, compassion and self-sacrifice of mothers, I am reminded of *Princess Alice* of the United Kingdom. The mother of Princess Alice was *Victoria (1819-1901), Queen of the United Kingdom* and its Commonwealth for 63 years and seven months, beginning at age 18 in 1837 until her death in 1901. The longevity of Queen Victoria's reign in the history of the British Monarchy is only surpassed by recently deceased *Queen Elizabeth*, who reigned for 70 years, from February 1952 until her death on September 8, 2022.

While not all women desire or choose to become mothers, many do—but when a woman is a Queen in her own right (a Queen regnant) or the wife of a ruling King (a Queen consort) she is expected, as part of her duties, to bring children into this world who might be heirs to the throne. Victoria gave birth to nine children, while Elizabeth was the mother of four.

It is not Queen Victoria or Queen Elizabeth I am reminded of as we observe Mother's Day in this month of May. Rather, I am reminded of *Princess Alice (1843-1878), the third child and second daughter of Queen Victoria.*

This story of Princess Alice is relevant to our day and age as we are so painfully and acutely aware of the COVID-19 virus that started its deadly march through our world only a few years ago. During the abbreviated lifetime of Princess Alice (as noted above, she died when she was only 35) diphtheria was one of the deadly diseases.

Diphtheria was never a pandemic like COVID-19 (almost seven million deaths at latest count) nor as horrific as the Spanish Flu of 1918 (worldwide deaths estimated between 25-75 million) and certainly not to be compared with the most deadly and infamous bubonic plague, also called the Black Death (estimates vary widely and wildly that this deadly disease claimed between 25 million and 200 million deaths in one five-year period alone).

While the Black Death (its name derives from the last stage before death when the skin of the afflicted person turned black) is thought to have its first known incidence in the Byzantine Empire ruled by Justinian, in the mid-500s AD, then later in China during the 1330s, its most significant outbreak was in Europe, lasting several hundred years.

This plague ravaged London in 1563, 1593, 1603, 1636 and 1665, and all of Europe through the 1500s and 1600s. *Estimates are that half of all children born in this era died of this disease before they could become adults.* Throughout human history mankind has been relentlessly stalked by disease, epidemics, plagues and pandemics.

With this larger picture in mind, back to diphtheria, back to mothers, and in particular Princess Alice. Before an effective vaccine was developed, diphtheria was a deadly, airborne virus spread from person to person. Black diphtheria, as it was known during the life of Princess Alice, was an infection of the nose and throat, making breathing and swallowing difficult.

When her son was diagnosed with black diphtheria, Princess Alice was devastated. She was already in fragile health herself, so she was warned to stay away from her son. But a mother can no more “stay away” from her child than the sun failing to rise.

As some relate the story, Princess Alice tried to, as we call it today, “stay at a safe social distance,” but one day, as she lurked outside his room, she heard her son ask his nurse why his mother didn’t kiss and hug him anymore.

That did it! All “heaven” broke loose as she rushed into her son’s room, throwing caution and her own personal safety to the wind, embracing him, “s-mother-ing” him with hugs and kisses. That moment of unfettered, unconditional love turned out to be the kiss of death for Princess Alice. Within a few weeks both mother and son died of black diphtheria. Princess Alice laid down her life, taking the risk that she might die if she ensured that her son knew of her love.

Not all mothers are filled with self-sacrificial love. Mothers, being human, are not perfect. Because some mothers were quite obviously imperfect, in some cases horribly flawed, some grown children find hunting for a Mother’s Day card that conveys honest and truthful sentiments to be an agonizing task (of course the same frustration can confront grown children when searching for a Father’s Day card).

In this respect, I remember a story about a woman named Julie who searched for and eventually settled on a Mother’s Day card with a blank page inside, because she could not find a card whose pre-written message was appropriate for her less-than-ideal relationship with her mother. As she sat down to write a Mother’s Day message for her obviously imperfect mother, Julie replayed a little bit of her history with her mother.

She realized she hadn’t been that easy to love—she remembered how many times she, as a daughter, was anything but kind, patient, caring and loving to her mother, and in fact how many times she made life hell-on-earth for the poor woman. Julie realized she had been a less-than-perfect daughter, and that she had been solely focusing on her mother’s lack of perfection. Julie decided to put the shoe on her own foot, eventually writing in the card, “To my mother on Mother’s Day—with love from your imperfect daughter.”

Mothers can have their moments! I recall a story about Amanda, who was exasperated with her five-year-old daughter Susie. Susie was a high-octane hurricane, filled with seemingly inexhaustible energy, leaving debris and mayhem in her wake. Susie was always “into something.”

After a mighty crash, Amanda went into the living room and found Susie crying—she had fallen and torn her pants (trousers for our British and some Canadian readers!). Amanda told Susie, “I told you to slow down and be careful but you never listen. Now go into your room and put on another pair of pants.”

A few minutes later, Amanda passed by the open door to her daughter’s room and saw the torn pants on the floor, but there was no evidence of Susie. Knowing that Susie was often some kind of quiet disaster brewing and preparing to explode, Amanda started looking for Susie.

She couldn’t find Susie, and even more troubling, she couldn’t **hear** her. But then Amanda passed by the door to the basement and saw the light on. Normally patient and long-suffering with her rambunctious five-year old daughter, Amanda momentarily lost her composure and yelled down the stairs, “Are you down there running around without your pants on?”

A deep voice cried out, “No madam, I’m reading the gas meter.”

Mothers endure all kinds of experiences with children as we “grow up”—they sometimes lose their patience, but in many if not most cases, mothers are always there for us, with compassion, understanding and love. No mother or father or wife or husband provides us with the perfect example of self-sacrificial love, but it is often mothers who take the most prominent role in giving of themselves, without reservation, for us.

The heart and core of our faith is Jesus—he is our center—our faith is founded on his cross. We are imperfect people—imperfect parents and spouses and children—thanks be to God for his never-failing perfect love.

Even as we honor our mothers, may we marvel, praise and give thanks for the never-ending, unconditional, in-spite-of, self-sacrificial love of God, who generously fills us with his grace, mercy and love, and in Christ, never stops serving us, self-sacrificially. Happy Mother’s Day one and all.

Your fellow servant, in Christ,



Greg Albrecht

President, Plain Truth Ministries

PS. We share this note of thanks from one of our Friends and Partners in New Mexico:

Six members of our family have passed away from COVID. The ones who have survived are having problems with migraine headaches and loss of taste and smell. I want to thank you for the beautiful and inspirational books you have sent me. These have helped us in getting through the darkest of times that we’ve had to go through. You have helped us to remain filled with hope. Thank you so very, very much. Keep up the good work!

CWR/PTM Prayer List—May 2023

These requests for prayer represent just a few of the thousands we receive and pray for. We invite you to join us in praying for these and the others that space does not permit us to include here. Thanks for joining with us as a CWR/PTM Prayer Partner.

Please pray for my sister, age 76, who has atrial fibrillation. Her visits to the hospital / emergency room are becoming more frequent.—Virginia

Please pray for relief from my suffocating claustrophobia and restore my faith that God is able to take care of it.—North Carolina

Please pray for my mother who has dementia and for my father who is suffering from inoperable kidney stones. Please also pray that my father will accept his condition and turn to God.—Wisconsin

Please pray that God would give me favor in my court case. I also request prayers for healing of my liver condition.—Texas

My eye surgery did not work. I'll be having another operation by a different surgeon. I'm a musician and I need to be able to see. I've been fighting this for three years now. Please pray for me.—Kansas

Please pray that God will help me overcome my gambling and alcohol addictions.—Washington

Please pray for me. I'm overtired and don't get a lot of sleep. I would really like to get my energy back so I can work and continue to do the things I enjoy.—California

It's with a heavy heart that I inform you of the passing of my wife. She was my friend, confidant, accountant and someone who brought me much comfort. God called her home after much discomfort and suffering. I want to thank all of you for your words of comfort and the prayers you offered over the years. Please continue to pray for me.—New York

Thanks to our loving God and all your prayers, my heart valve was replaced with success. Please continue to pray about my other heart problems and relief from the side effects of the medication I am having to take, as I am sensitive to drugs.—Louisiana

Please pray for my son-in-law who has Stage-4 rare aggressive cancer.—Kentucky

I request prayers for my broken left shoulder, my back pain and the burning sensation on the bottom of my feet. Thank you in advance for your concern and prayers.—Minnesota

Please pray for complete healing for me, as I have glaucoma in both eyes and I have macular degeneration in my right eye.—South Carolina

Please continue to pray for the gospel to be proclaimed with ever increasing strength, might, power and clarity to all the world and thank you to everyone involved in PTM for your efforts to this end.—New York

Please pray for my grandchildren who are suffering from various mental and emotional problems, including cerebral palsy.—Illinois

I have suffered with a tumor in my head and all of the associated side effects for 13 years. It has turned my world upside-down, but I continue to do my best to serve others. I ask for prayers for healing and strength.—Washington

My dear friend is suffering from the pain of numerous invasive tests and scans, and she is now in the middle of the agony of waiting for results. Please pray for her encouragement and healing.—California

Our Father in Heaven: We thank you for your grace, mercy and love. You love each of these individuals, and we thank you in advance for the answers you will provide for each request. With thanksgiving for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, our suffering servant who heals us, in whose name we pray—Amen.