



May 11, 2008, Pentecost Sunday

## Radical Mothers' Day

Mothers' Day

**T**he Year 2008 is the 150th anniversary of Mothers' Day in the United States. Coinciding this year with Pentecost, it is a moment to remind ourselves of the radical roots of Mothers' Day, which began in rural West Virginia as a social change movement. Anna Reeves Jarvis, an Appalachian homemaker, organized a day to raise awareness of poor health conditions in her community, a cause she believed would be best advocated by mothers. She called it "Mother's Work Day." She continued organizing throughout the years of the Civil War, working with women on both sides of the conflict to encourage more adequate care for all the wounded, and later working for reconciliation between Union and Confederate neighbors.

Fifteen years later, Julia Ward Howe, a Boston poet, pacifist, suffragist, and author of the lyrics to the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," wrote the "Mother's Day Proclamation" calling for a "Mothers' Day for Peace," to work for peace and disarmament.

Leader: On the day of Pentecost, followers of Jesus gathered,  
including many women:

**All: Mary, the mother of Jesus,  
Mary Magdalene, Mary and Martha,  
Salome, Susanna, Joanna,  
the Canaanite woman and her daughter,  
the Samaritan woman, Philip's four daughters,  
Peter's mother-in law,  
women who had been healed or touched by Jesus and many, many more.**

Leader: As the Spirit fell upon them,  
all hearts were opened and they began to prophesy:

**All: Some used the utterance of wisdom,  
another the gift of knowledge,  
others became healers and interpreters of tongues.  
All used their gifts for the common good.  
In the presence of the Spirit, in the power of Pentecost love,  
they proclaimed a vision of God's shalom.**

Leader: Today, we remember the women of history  
who have been moved by the Spirit  
to proclaim and live out God's vision of peace with justice:  
*(Let us lift up the names of women who have worked for justice and peace  
to honor on this Mother's Day)*

**All: May your daughters prophesy justice and your sons dream peace!**

Leader: On this Mother's Day, let us lift up the names of women  
in our own lives who have mothered us and  
witnessed to us the power of love and the Spirit:  
*(you are invited to lift up the names of women who have nurtured your life  
and educated you in faith)*

**All: May your daughters prophesy justice and your sons dream peace!**

Leader: As it happened on the day of Pentecost,  
let the Spirit come upon us as we go about our ministry together,  
today and always.

**All: Amen!**

*Radical Mothers' Day* was written by Ann L. Hanson, Minister for Sexuality Education and Justice,  
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