

Some time ago I expressed my reluctance to share the Ventry Reflection with another long-time member. She told me to just choose a topic and go with it. Sound advice.

When I sat down to think about it, there were so many topics to choose from – the difficulty changed to making the choice. Certainly, over the past year, COVID-19, Immigration Problems at our Border, Racial Justice would be appropriate topics but my heart favored a more celebratory subject.

It's May, spring has finally arrived and it is the month of Mother's Day. A day we celebrate a very important person/people in our lives and families.

The dictionary defines Mother's Day as a celebration honoring the mother in the family and motherhood, maternal bonds and the influence mothers hold in society. For most of here in the U.S., it is a family day which takes many forms – gifts, visits home or phone calls and/or maybe a family brunch or dinner. It is the one day of the year a mom is celebrated and looks forward to the absence of cooking, cleaning up and laundry. She is, "Queen for a Day", and usually pays for it the next.

Mother's Day can be traced back to ancient Greece and Rome. Festivals honored mother goddesses. Modern precedent is traced to a Christian festival called, "Mothering Sunday". Over time, the Church was pushed out and family in – "Mothering Sunday" became a secular holiday. Children presented small gifts and flower to the moms.

Mother's Day in the U.S. dates back to the Civil War and the Women's Suffrage period. Julia Ward Howe campaigned for a "Mother's Peace Day".

Anne Jarvis is known to have turned Mother's Day into a national holiday in 1908 to honor sacrifices mothers make for their children. She did so with financial backing from John Wanamaker's Retail Stores. By 1920, after originally conceiving and promoting Mother's Day, she began a campaign against it since it had become too commercialized. Anne died disowning the holiday altogether.

Other noteworthy Mother's Day mentions (some of us may remember) are in 1968 Coretta Scott King, the recently widowed wife of Martin Luther King hosted a march in support of underprivileged women and children. In 1970 women's groups used the holiday for equal rights and access to childcare.

Prior to writing this reflection, the history of women's movements on this subject was not something I particularly thought about. I do recall celebrating Mother's Day as a child and asking why there wasn't a Children's Day. The reply, of course, was, "Every Day is Children's Day". As a former Catholic, the month of May was designated to "Mary, the Mother of Jesus" and now I wonder if that isn't one of the underlying reasons I chose to write about Mother's Day in this reflection. It's difficult to take the Catholic out of you.

This Mother's Day is one I will remember extra fondly. Our family was able to spend time together and my grandsons chose the perfect gifts for me: a York peppermint patty, a lilac branch, and a latte coffee – they know my weaknesses! These along with homemade Mother's Day cards and hugs (while holding our breath) made the day unforgettable.

In closing, I include an epitaph to my mother and mother-in-law – two beautiful, strong and loving women.

Book of Proverbs 31:25-31 “Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. She opens her mouth and wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. She looks well to the way of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.”.