



*Serving the Spiritual Needs of Grieving Parents
Whose Children of Any Age Have Died by Any Cause,
No Matter How Long Ago*

**Your Emmaus Ministry
Remote Retreat Guide
May 8, 2021
9:30am EDT**



MOTHER'S DAY

[To Our Emmaus Fathers: This week's retreat focuses on grieving mothers; however, you will be able to relate to many parts as well.]

More than 150 years ago, Ann Jarvis was the initial driving force behind the push for a Mother's Day. She had worked during the Civil War and wanted an annual memorial to recognize the pain of grieving mothers of sons who had died in the war.

Ann gave birth to 12 children, but only four of them survived into adulthood, so she knew a mother's grief firsthand.

It took 50 years, but the first Mother's Day was finally memorialized in 1907 in just one small church. On May 8, 1914 President Woodrow Wilson made it an official national holiday. However, within a few years, Ann's intent was hijacked by commercialism and the desire to sell products.

Eventually, Ann's daughter, Anna Jarvis, began a lifelong fight against what she saw as a violation her mother's intention for the Mother's Day holiday: a loving tribute to all mothers, but especially those suffering the grievous loss of their precious children.

So... we don't feel the need for a special day apart for bereaved mothers. Mother's Day IS our day. A day to acknowledge the fact that, whether we are adoptive or birth mothers, ...whether our children are here with us on earth or waiting for us in heaven, they are eternal beings and we are their Mothers forever, no matter what--just as Mary is Jesus' mother forever. And this weekend, we celebrate the beautiful privilege of this vocation--together.

Preparation:

Ahead of time, we recommend you find a quiet place in your home where you can immerse yourself in this retreat. Have your child's Emmaus Memorial Candle (or other candle) available along with a lighter or matches.

Take several deep breaths to cleanse your thoughts and open yourself to wherever the Holy Spirit is calling you today several minutes before the retreat is scheduled to begin.

At 9:30am EDT (our normal retreat beginning time) open your email and join other fellow Emmaus Parent Companions in getting away from the rest of the world, at least for a time, to focus on God and on your precious child.

CANDLE LIGHTING PRAYER (Light your candle)

We begin... In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen

Lord, you are the Light of the World. *Help us feel your presence in the lighting of this candle.*

Lord, you gave us the gift of our children. *Help us feel their presence in the lighting of this candle.*

Lord, you gave us the hope of eternal life. *Help us confirm that hope in the lighting of this candle.*

Lord, you gave us love. *Help us to know that, as much as we love our children, you love them even more.*

We ask you this through Christ, Our Lord
Amen.

OPENING SONG: [To Where You Are](#)

A breathe away is not far to where you are.

PRAYER OF THOSE MAKING A RETREAT

Loving Spirit of Wisdom,
Guide my thoughts and my memories.

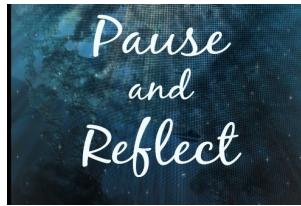
In the light of your love,
May I see what is important for me to remember,
What is important for me to hold to my heart,
And what I need to simply let go of in peace.

I trust you to be my guide,
Even when the path seems unclear to me.

We pray this in the name of Your Son, the Healer,
Our Lord, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

REFLECTION #1: [To The Mothers Hurting on Mother's Day](#) by Jessi Snapp

Our children may not be physically here--but we are still mothers and fathers. We are their parents forever.



Take a moment to selah... pause... breathe...
Reflect on what you received from Reflection #1
Clear your mind before focusing on Reflection #2.

REFLECTION #2: [The Pieta: An Image of Hope... Love... Faith](#)

Dearest Mother, We can only try to imagine the sorrow you felt as you held your Son close to your Immaculate Heart. But we know that your sorrow was also mixed with hope as you anticipated the fulfillment of His promise. In faith, you knew this grief was not the end.

PRAYER OF A GRIEVING MOTHER TO OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

by Shelley Ramsey

FATHER,

We mamas who have buried our precious children hurt. Please comfort us.

Soothe this piercing pain that rears its ugly head and tries to render us helpless.

Thank you for holding us in our grief. Thank you for sitting with us in our grief.

Tell our children that we love and miss them.

Help us to be grateful women.

Lord, we give our surviving children back to you. Don't let us impose our grief and fears upon them. Let them become the people You want them to be.

Help us to flee bitterness and anger.
Fill us with forgiveness and love.

Show us what you have for us to do while we live on this side of heaven--and give us strength to do it well.
Amen

CLOSING SONG: [Holy Mother](#) by Eric Clapton and Luciano Pavarotti
(See background story under "*Additional Resources*" below.)

Holy Mother, where are you?
Tonight I feel broken in two
I've seen the stars fall from the sky
Holy Mother, can't keep from crying.

Oh I need your help this time
Get me through this lonely night
Tell me please which way to turn

To find myself again.

Holy Mother, hear my prayer
Somehow I know you're still there
Send me please some peace of mind
Take away this pain.

I can't wait, I can't wait, I can't wait any longer
I can't wait, I can't wait, I can't wait for you.

Holy Mother, hear my cry
I've cursed your name a thousand times
I've felt the anger running through my soul
All I need is a hand to hold.

Oh I feel the end has come
No longer my legs will run
You know I would rather be
In your arms tonight.

When my hands no longer play
My voice is still, I fade away
Holy Mother, then I'll be
Lying in, safe within your arms.

CLOSING BLESSING

Let us end our time of retreat...united with Brother John Maganzini, OFM and the Franciscan Friars at Saint Anthony Shrine in Boston, MA, by blessing one another. Raise your right hand and, together, let us virtually give this Blessing from Mary, the Mother of Our God, who knows our pain:

Mary, Mother, we turn to you with full reliance on your presence with us this day.

We renew our faith and trust in your intercession that your beloved, Son, Jesus, will restore our joy and our peace.

We turn to you, Mother of hope.
Open our hearts, even in difficult moments,
to feel your presence, "on the road of our
everyday lives."

Mary, we hope in you.

As we bless each other...
In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

AMEN

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Hear Clapton and Pavarotti Sing a Prayer to the Holy Mother](#) by J-P Mauro
The background story to this beautiful prayer.



- [**You Wish Mother's Day Didn't Exist, Don't You?**](#)

You are wonderful! You are brave! You are beautiful! You are loved!

- [**Imaginative Prayer: Mary Mourning the Death of Jesus**](#)

I have gone down into the pit with him...why may I not die with him? I must rest a while. I must rest on the dark side of love, and wait for the blood red flower of the dawn...

- [**Prayers For and By Mothers in All Situations**](#)



**EMMAUS MINISTRY
FOR GRIEVING
PARENTS**

[**UPCOMING 2021
SCHEDULE.**](#)

[**PLEASE JOIN US!
FOR MORE
INFORMATION--OR
TO REGISTER,
CLICK HERE.**](#)

You will receive a new email next Friday.

Please join your fellow
Emmaus Parent Companions
again next Saturday at 9:30am EDT

Until then, may God bless you and keep you.
Sending many warm, virtual hugs

For past Remote Retreat Guides, see [here](#).



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