

## Models for Mother's Day 2021

***Thus says God the Lord: "I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you...." -Isaiah 42:6***

This Friday before Mother's Day feels like the day before May Long weekend when your teenager is going off for their first camping trip with friends. Only this time the adventure is the whole new world of COVID vaccinations.... As they line up for their turn, may nothing shake their belief in immortality, while we cling to that faith even as we pray for them. Let the words Isaiah heard from God be for us all, teenagers and their families, and especially their mothers, a promise of assurance that the God who is inspiring them will also hold them near and see them through to the new post-pandemic world.

We have many supports, more information than we can absorb, and models both glamorous and ordinary to help us as the vaccine eligibility age drops into the teens. Our church's Calendar of Commemorations this week reminds us of three women of faith. Monica was the mother of St. Augustine, who prayed desperately that her son would not follow his father's unbelieving and unfaithful ways. God answered her prayers first by bringing her husband to faith in Christ, and then by gradually bringing Augustine into a relationship with the foremost preacher of the day. When he was baptized, Monica travelled from their home in Egypt to be present in Milan where he was studying and teaching. She died in 387 C.E. of a ship-borne fever while they were travelling back. Confiding in him that this had been the happiest time of her life, she told him "Do not fret that I must be buried far from our home in Africa. Nothing is far from God, and I have no fear that God will know where to find me when Christ comes to raise me to life at the end of the world."

Julian, or Juliana, spent most of her life as an anchorite nun in the convent at Norwich, England. Somewhere in her thirties she compiled a book of devotions on the love of God. *Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love* "declares that love is the meaning of religious experience, provided by Christ who is love, for the purpose of love" (*Sundays and Seasons 2021*, p. 177). Evangelical Lutheran Worship has one of her prayers set to music: "Mothering God, you gave me birth in the bright morning of this world. Creator source of every breath, you are my rain, my wind, my sun..." (#735). Its another of her prayers that is offered below.

Our third model is Jane Borthwick. Jane was a member of the Free Church of Scotland who lived and died in Edinburgh (1813-1897). She devoted herself to the social work of her church, both at home and in far away countries. We are grateful to her for translating many songs and hymns from "the Land of Luther" (as she called it). One of her translations is #624 in *EvLW*, a hymn from Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf: "Jesus still lead on, till our rest be won. Heavenly leader, still direct us, still support, console, protect us, till we safely stand in the promised land." I hope and pray that one of our young musicians will be inspired to translate the faith of Isaiah 42 into words and song to help their generation shape a faithful post-pandemic world. For this, and for all our hopes and fears for this and every long weekend, let us pray:

***In you, Father all-mighty, we have our preservation and our bliss. In you, Christ, we have our restoring and our saving. You are our mother, brother, and saviour. In you, our Lord the Holy Spirit, is marvelous and plenteous grace. You are our clothing: for love you wrap us and embrace us. You are our maker, our lover, and our keeper. Teach us to believe that by your grace all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well. Amen***