

Our mother, our paradise

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Article

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MY mother passed away exactly a year ago last week after being hospitalised for several months at Kuala Lumpur Hospital. She had been hospitalised elsewhere but had not experienced anything comparable to the care she received under Datuk Dr Zaki Morad and his dedicated staff.

It was because of this that the departure of my mother was made a little easier, knowing full well that we had tried everything we could to provide the best for her and that it was time for her to return to God.

As believers, we are convinced that there can never be a better place to return to, except to our beloved Creator.

As believers, too, we are entitled to the privilege of being human and to feel the pain with a sense of deep loss for someone who had been part of our life for so long.

My mother was not just another ordinary person whose presence could be substituted by another. Earl Riney said: "The mother's love is like God's love; He loves us not because we are lovable, but because it is His nature to love, and because we are His children."

All the more, the emptiness that mother left behind was such a void that it is impossible to fill. This is testimony that she was an embodiment of the Godly love and tender care which exudes naturally from her heart and soul.

After all, it is the same tender loving care that nurtured all of us in the family to the extent that we truly appreciate what God-conscious life is all about.

Writes Wayne Winters in *Ode to Mum*: "I look back on my childhood and thank the stars above. For everything you gave me, but mostly for your love."

In other words, by virtue of her love, mother will always be with us and be part of our lives — be it a time of joy or despair, during moments of difficulty, or celebration.

In many ways, though her physical presence is always sorely missed, she had given us enough to hang on to when she was alive. That is how much mother means to us as a family, and that is true for all mothers.

So special are they that their sacrifices and selflessness fit well with the description offered by one Tenneva Jordan:

"A mother is a person who seeing there are only four pieces of pie for five people, promptly announces she never did care for pie."

But still many would take their mother for granted. As Catherine Pulsifer puts it: "You don't appreciate your mother until you're a mother yourself."

Those who are not biologically destined to be one should remember what the famous Dr Benjamin Spock has to say: "What good mothers and fathers instinctively feel like doing for their babies is usually best after all."

I could still recall many of the pertinent decisions that my mother, on consultation with my father, made despite their having to put up with great sacrifices just because it was about giving me the very best!

Truly these are unforgettable moments since we are a not a-well-to-do family.

How true what Ruth E. Renkel expresses: "Sometimes the poorest woman leaves her children the richest inheritance."

Or that of the anonymous saying: "A mother is someone who dreams great dreams for you, but then she lets you chase the dreams you have for yourself and loves you just the same."

For the last one year, therefore, only time seems to be the great comforter for the family, though time, too, stood still on several occasions.

The memory of her is all that we have left to cherish, "for the mother is and must be, whether she knows it or not, the greatest, strongest and most lasting teacher her children have", according to Hannah Smith.

Indeed, she taught us to be strong when things were rough, to be honest when faced with temptations, to be sincere when offering help, and to be gentle when dealing with just about any living thing.

And, most of all, to be steadfast and patient when we need to make some sacrifices for the betterment of all. And never to expect any return from it.

Scottish historian, critic and sociological writer Thomas Carlyle once wrote: "Who is it that loves me and will love me forever with an affection which no chance, no misery, no crime of mine can do away? It is you, my mother."

Or that as acknowledged by Abraham Lincoln: "All that I am or hope to be, I owe to my mother."

It is certainly not difficult to understand and appreciate why Prophet Muhammad insisted that paradise is to be found at the feet of our mothers.

In trying to keep our mother alive in our memory, we cannot but dream of that very paradise with a great of hope, to be able to dwell in it as worthy and deserving children who cared for their parents.

To paraphrase one other saying: "We are not perfect parents and we will never be. You are not perfect children and you will never be. But put us together and we will be the best combination we would ever be."

Those among us fortunate enough to have their mothers and fathers around them, please keep this in mind.

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