



breadfortheworld
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

May 9, 2010
Sixth Sunday of Easter
Mary Newbern-Williams

RCL: Acts 16:9-15; Psalm 67; Revelation 21:10, 22–22:5, John 14:23-29 or John 5:1-9
LM: Acts 15:1-2, 22-29; Psalm 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8; Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23; John 14:23-29

Ms. Mary was an inspiration to the entire community. There wasn't a person in need who came to her whom she didn't help or encourage with a kind word or act. Her kindness to others often came with some inconvenience to herself, because people did not always think about her needs but let their own needs prevail. Her family sometimes spoke sternly to her about always putting others first, to which she usually replied, "It's going to be all right. That's what Jesus would do. He would help someone."

The community loved Mary so much that they lovingly nicknamed her "Ms. Mary." Only those who had known her for many years dropped the title. Children raced each other to help her carry her groceries from the corner store. Adults stopped by her home and talked with her for hours, always knowing that they would be offered lunch, dinner, or dessert. On holidays friends and family would grace her home, even if they had not come to see her for months. Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays found crowds of family and friends visiting, staying for days, and feeling blessed just to be in Mary's company. Her culinary talents were second to none, and if she knew you were coming, she would fix your favorite meal.

Mary's family practically worshiped her, and as she was dying a few years ago, at the age of eighty-eight, Ms. Mary's family stood around her bed singing "Amazing Grace," praying the Lord's Prayer, and reciting Psalm 23, which was her personal favorite. Her grandson once told their pastor that he knew Psalm 23 because it was hanging on the wall at his grandmother's house. Mary's family told her how much they loved her and how precious she was to them. When she breathed her last breath, they thanked God for being so fortunate to have had an angel for a mother.

Mary's first child, Louise, took care of her since the beginning of her diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease. Louise put everything aside for her mother and let nothing inconvenience her, often saying something like, "She put everyone else first all of her life. Now she comes first, no matter what." She always did.



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Mary left a legacy to her family and to the world. Love others as yourself, serve as God has engifted you, and always have a kind word. Mary's legacy to the world is simple, namely, the message of Jesus Christ.

Jesus' legacy is a message to the world. In today's text from John 14, Jesus tells his disciples that he will not leave them without an advocate, the Holy Spirit. Jesus' legacy of love and commitment to creation are an inspiration to all. No matter who we are, we should always know whose we are. No matter what our life condition, God in Christ loves us unconditionally and is present with us through the power of the Holy Spirit. No matter how hopeless life's challenges seem, there is always hope in Christ.

In Revelation 21, John lifts up the visionary hope that night will be no more. The light of the Lord will be so bright that it will be enough to shine for all time, and no sun or moon will be necessary. Organizations and people committed to serving others in our needy world are the light that shines for creation. These organizations bring hope to those whose hope is dimmed by their difficulties, and they represent the love of Jesus Christ and his love for the people of the world. Scripture reminds us of the shining light we bring from which others can benefit. "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matt 5:16). Jesus Christ is the light that shines in our hearts and in our souls. In our work to ensure that hungry people have enough, that light emanates in a way that not only provides food to nourish their bodies but also fills their souls. The legacy of love Ms. Mary leaves is a legacy that begins with Jesus Christ.

Children's Time [Larry Hollar]

Turn out the lights in the worship space, and turn on a large lantern flashlight. Hold your hand over the front of the flashlight and show how your hand can glow. Our bodies don't always glow this way, but when we do what God wants for us, we "light up" other people's lives. You might pick out some people in the congregation and shine the light on them while the children say, "We love you, Mr. _____" or "God cares for you, Ms. _____." Sharing God's love makes the whole world brighter (now have the lights dramatically come back on).

Musical Suggestions [Larry Hollar]

Amazing Grace—*The United Methodist Hymnal* 378

The Gift of Love—*Chalice Hymnal* 526

Peace I Leave with You, My Friends—*The New Century Hymnal* 249

For the Healing of the Nations—*Gather Comprehensive* 719

Now Let Us All, in Hymns of Praise—*The New Century Hymnal* 529

Unless a Grain of Wheat—*Gather Comprehensive* 697



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