



A Mothers' Day Reflection - 2025

By Maureen Hoare

Maureen and her late husband Geoff Hoare have been members of the St Carthage's Parish for many years, having originally followed Father Elligate from the parish of St Clement's Bulleen. Maureen is an active member of the Drummond Place community in Carlton.

Good morning, happy mothers' day to all mothers!

Mothers Day began in the USA during the Civil War where women gathered to help orphaned children and wounded soldiers. They held a memorial service to protest against the war. In Australia, we all think of mothers on Anzac Day and the long rows of white crosses on battlefields in France and elsewhere. Mothers Day celebrated here in 1924. White carnations are the traditional flowers of Mother's Day.

Mary, mother of Jesus, had her baby in a stable. She was anxious about Jesus preaching in the Temple when he was very young. At the marriage feast of Cana, Mary did not want Jesus to change water into wine. Imagine her anguish as she stood at the Cross looking up at her beloved son.

I recently read the biography of Penny Wong, Federal foreign minister. Penny's mother had not wanted her to become involved in politics; yet, she was in the public gallery at Parliament House when Penny was sworn in. Penny, at the time of making her maiden speech, looked up at her mother and said: 'your intellect, mischiefness, sense of humour and unfailing love sustained me'.

Another mother, Lois Greste, spoke out about her distress upon Peter's arrest in Egypt. She acted on her distress in practical ways by writing letters to lobby politicians and decided that a member of the Greste family would maintain a constant presence in Cairo to support Peter during his long incarceration. She spoke of the searing heat and daily frustrations of grappling with local officials but never gave up in her vigil of protest and support for Peter.

Every night on the news, we witness mothers weeping in despair in war torn countries and in the face of unimaginable horrors.

My own mother was a wonderful, inspiring and tenacious woman. Christened Ursula Anne, she changed her name as a young woman to Nancy until she learned one of the elephants at Melbourne Zoo was called Nancy - she thus became and remained her whole life, Nnce. Born in 1915 outside Euroa, she boarded from the age of 8 years at a convent run by nuns of the Faithful Companion of Jesus order. In the holiday, she came home where she rode her horse to the tennis club, racquet in one hand and sandwich platter in the other. At 16 years, on the day she left school, she cut off her long thick auburn plaits with the bread knife!

Soon after, she trained in Melbourne as a nurse, before returning to nurse at the Wangaratta Base Hospital. There she met and became engaged to the tall, dashing Joe Gorman. Not long after the engagement, Joe was driving Nance, Nance's mother and Joe's sister, Monica, to Melbourne to buy the wedding clothes; however there was a terrible road accident. Nance's mother was killed, Nance suffered a broken pelvis that required some six months of hospitalisation and Joe and Monica were also injured. After Nance had recovered sufficiently, Nance and Joe married and began life on a farm Joe had purchased outside Wangaratta. Nance embraced farming life: milking cows, rode horses, had a marvellous garden including an orchard from which she bottled fruit. She fed armies of shearers and workmen for lunch, morning tea and afternoon. She was especially famous in the district for her sponges, particular the ginger fluff. We had wonderful holidays in Melbourne staying in St Kilda at the George or the Esplanade.

Nance was an active and involved member of the local community and involved on numerous committees. Once my sister and brother and I were all of school age, Nance was frequently president or secretary of mothers clubs at the school. At one point the government directed that children attending Catholic schools could travel on the local school buses with state school children. Several times, however, the headmaster of the local high school came onto the bus and said it was too crowded and Catholic students could not longer use the bus service. Nance immediately raised this with the local member of parliament and before too long, the local catholic children were back on the bus.

Mothers of the world are amazing, loving and dedicated to their children. They want to change the world - for it to be safe for all.

Mothers and grandmothers inspire us all, for mothers balancing work and careers getting to children to school and sports shopping and running households.