

WITNESS for JUSTICE

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Moving from Lament to Hope

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This Sunday, May 14 is Mother's Day. Some families will gather in sacred and holy places of worship to celebrate their mothers. Others will choose to take their beloveds to brunch or stay home and cook a great meal to commemorate the love, sacrifices, and memories of mothers still alive and those who have passed on. In some black churches Mother's Day is extremely sacred. One does not have to be a biological mother to be honored. Recognition is also important for women who are godmothers, and caretakers of someone's children within the community.

In my home church there is space to honor mothers who were martyrs and trailblazers, activists and preachers. We remember the women who prayed for the generations to come to have the freedoms they did not. Resistance to racism kept mothers praying that their sons and daughters would live long enough to have their own families, equal access to education, safe communities to live in, affordable housing, and the ability to live without fear.

I believe in my own family the women prayed that I would be respected at all times, treated with dignity, and protected from my enemies and white racism. They wanted me and their own children to out-live them. This prayer has been answered.

However there will be mothers who can share with the world how acts of violence as a result of racism, militarism, and extreme materialism have robbed them of enjoying the hopes and dreams they had for their children at birth.

On Sunday there will be many who claim Christianity as their faith tradition and they will move past Mother's Day and never say the names out loud of these mothers:

Sybrina Fulton, mother of Trayvon Martin
Leslie McSpadden, mother of Michael Brown
Gwen Carr, mother of Eric Garner
Angela Helton, mother of Rekia Boyd
Samaria Rice, mother of Tamir Rice
Geneva Read-Veal, mother of Sandra Bland
Tina Hunter, mother of LaQuan McDonald
Valerie Castile, mother of Philando Castile
Gloria Darden, mother of Freddie Gray, and
Charmaine Edwards, mother of Jordan Edwards.

God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



There are so many more names to say out loud daily, weekly, and monthly as a practice of intercessory prayer on the family's behalf.

Will your church be that church that sends the message that a mother's pain, grief, sorrow, and the unbelievable nightmare of identifying her baby lying in blood on the street is not important? Will your church gloss over the fact that those with guns, privilege, and power will spend the day ignoring the ever-present wound in a mother's heart inflicted by hate for black and brown bodies?

Yet, in his excruciating and unimaginable pain there stands his mother, Mary. Jesus makes eye contact, he can see in his mother's eyes the anguish and pain, heartache, and rivers of tears as she embraces her sisters around the foot of the cross. Perhaps she tries to reach out and touch her only son for the last time. Perhaps she scans the crowd to see if the 5,000 he fed would be there to support her, or the blind who now had sight, or the crippled who could now walk, or the mute who could now talk, or the physically and spiritually dead who were raised to new life in His name. And in her heart she might have asked... "Where are they now?"

Will mothers lamenting the death of their children ever be able to heal and move towards hope? Will mothers who have faith in Jesus ever be able to sing songs of joy again on Mother's Day in church? Will they see the Christian Church stand with them, pray for them, and be available long after the burial of their children? Or will they too ask ... "Where are they now?"

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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