

Sacred Mother's Day

by Frederick Wickert

was startled one evening to hear a newscaster mention that our nations most sacred holiday was coming that weekend. Three days later, a morning newscaster reminded that the next day was to be our nations most sacred holiday, Mothers day.

I could not believe what I had heard. Sacred? How can that be? I always thought “sacred,” was a word used to refer to things of a religious origin. As for religious holidays, I could immediately think of several. Christmas, Easter, Hanukkah, Passover and Ramadan for example. Somehow Mothers Day just doesn’t seem to fit.

There are many holidays that I never associated with being sacred. Fathers Day for example. Surely, if Mothers day were sacred, shouldn’t Fathers Day also be considered sacred?

Of course, we have so many other revered holidays. Independence day, the birth of the greatest free nation the world has ever known. I have never heard it described as sacred. Memorial day, the day we remember and honor our dead, especially our war dead, is a holiday worth calling sacred. In some circles, I am sure that it is.

We have Thanksgiving, a day based on giving thanks to God for a bountiful harvest, celebrated by our earliest European settlers and the native Americans who befriended and helped them. It was our earliest American holiday and one would think, about as sacred as an invented holiday can be.

Columbus day, in my opinion, is far from being a sacred holiday, though many have religious services celebrating it. Columbus never set foot in America as far as I know. If he did, he certainly wasn’t the first. There is ample evidence that others came here long before Columbus ever set sail.

We have Halloween. I’m sure that name raises many an eyebrow. How, you might ask, could Halloween ever be considered as sacred? The word Halloween comes from the phrase, all hallowed eve. Is not the word hallowed just another word for sacred? Was not Halloween once called the Eve of All Saints Day? Is there not a distinct connection between saints and sacred?

In our recent history there have been many instances that have cast considerable doubt on the reverence in which we hold motherhood. There have been women bearing children infected with AIDS or addicted to cocaine or heroin. There have been mothers in the news that deliberately drowned their children. Others have held pillows over the faces of their children until they died from suffocation. No matter how many times it is preached in the media of the dangers of leaving children locked in the car, we continue to hear of tragic deaths of children left locked in the car while Mom went shopping or got her hair done. A few summers ago, we heard of a mother training her child to steal items in a department store.

We cannot paint all mothers with the same brush. There is no question the majority of mothers make great sacrifices for their children and do all they can to care for them, and bring them up to the best of their ability. These mothers deserve to be honored at all times. Not just once a year.

Is Mothers Day sacred? Let us examine that question for a moment. The book of Exodus in the Bible lists among the Ten Commandments, the following: “Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”

Webster’s dictionary defines sacred as:”1. Devoted or dedicated to a deity or to some religious purpose; consecrated. 2. entitled to veneration or religious respect by association with divinity or divine things; holy. 3. pertaining to or connected with religion (opposed to secular or profane): sacred music; sacred books. 4. reverently dedicated to some person, purpose, or object: a morning hour sacred to study. 5. regarded with reverence: the sacred memory of a dead hero. 6. secured against violation, infringement, etc., as by

reverence or sense of right: sacred rights. 7. properly immune from violence, interference, etc., as a person or office.

Never might I entertain the idea of arguing with the Bible or with Webster's dictionary, so I must conclude there is strong evidence to support the title of sacred for Mothers Day. I cannot find the evidence to support it as, "the nations most sacred holiday."

Mothers Day first started in the United States about 150 years ago, when Anna Jarvis, an Appalachian housewife organized in her community a day she called "Mothers Work day." When she died in 1905, her daughter, also named Anna, began a campaign to memorialize the life work of her mother. For nine years she worked hard lobbying prominent businessmen and government officials. Her efforts paid off when in 1914; President Woodrow Wilson signed a bill recognizing Mother's Day as a national holiday.

Now Mother's Day, celebrated on the second Sunday in May, has become the most popular day of the year for restaurants as mothers are taken out for dinner. Telephone companies and florists are also their busiest of the year on that day.