

Sunday 'special' day

■ Celebration varies among countries.

In Yugoslavia, it is two Sundays before Christmas. In England, it is called Mothering Sunday and comes about three weeks before Easter. But in the U.S.A., Mother's Day is the second Sunday in May.

The dates differ and the ways of celebrating may vary but Mother's Day around the world is a special set-aside time to honor Mothers. Some mothers will be honored in the old traditional ways. Others will be treated to new and unique experiences.

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On that same day, however, some mothers will not be celebrating but mourning – mothers who have lost their children by death or drugs or other tragedies. And some motherless children on Mother's Day will feel their loss and perhaps identify with the words of the old Negro Spiritual, "Sometimes I feel like a motherless child, Sometimes I feel like a motherless child, A long ways from home, A long ways from home."

A week before Christmas (December 1999), one of my nieces died unexpectedly. A few days after the funeral her son mentioned how difficult it was going to be coping with holidays "like Mother's Day." I understood his feelings because my mother died when I was a freshman in college "a long ways from home" and Mother's Day became, for me, a dreaded holiday for a very long time.

Often a lasting tribute honoring a mother's memory can help ease the loss. That's one way Cynthia Cooper handled her loss. Her story is told in Clarity Magazine.

"My mother was a remarkable lady," said Cynthia. "I saw her struggle and persevere through a lot of tough times for us (8) kids. I learned my work ethic from her."

When her mother died of cancer, Cynthia developed a nonprofit foundation that donates money to cancer organizations, and another foundation that benefits inner-city children who have cancer.

Cynthia Cooper is "the Michael Jordan of women's basketball" and the top scorer for the Houston Comets. Last September, she led her team to its third consecutive WNBA Championship. Cynthia's mother was her inspiration. She enjoyed watching Cynthia play basketball and never missed a game until she became too ill to attend.

For a growing population of adult children, Mother's Day is forever altered because they are trapped in a role-reversal that requires them to "mother" their mothers as old age takes over. In the May issue of Daily Word, Colleen Zuck looks at the past, and also at how different things are today as she "mothers" her mother.

"I let memories of my mother fill my mind. Throughout my growing-up years, her kiss had eased both my emotional and physical hurts. She had always been there for me whenever I needed her, doing everything she could think of to make me feel better.

"Momma is in a special-care unit now, near my work and home so I can visit her every day. I love to hug and kiss her - my attempt to keep her from slipping farther away from me."

Mother's Day will be a day of aching emptiness for the young woman I met last month who told me her mother was brutally murdered. This distraught daughter said her mother had been "a good mother" and didn't deserve to die that way! What a horrendously traumatic burden this grieving daughter is bearing.

To find solace and begin healing is a S-L-O-W process, but I hope this young woman will - someday - be able to turn her raw pain and deep suffering into celebrating good memories of her mother.

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