



Stewardship

→ *in Motion*

May 2007

“All that I am or ever hope to be, I owe to my angel mother.”
—Abraham Lincoln

During the 1850's, a pioneering woman named Anna Reeves Jarvis organized “**Mother's Work Day Clubs**” in the area around what is today Grafton, West Virginia. The clubs provided medicines for the poor, inspected milk for children, provided nursing care for the sick, and shelters for children with tuberculosis.

When the Civil War broke out she called together four of her clubs and asked them to make a pledge that friendship and good will would not be a casualty of the war. In a remarkable display of courage and compassion the women nursed soldiers from both sides and saved many lives from both sides. As if that weren't enough, Anna Reeves Jarvis became a genuine peacemaker after the war. The wounds and animosity between families who fought on either side were deep and harsh. Anna Reeves Jarvis organized “Mothers' Friendship Days” to bring together families across the Mason-Dixon line.

Anna Reeves Jarvis had a daughter named Anna Jarvis, who was an impressionable child and teenager when her mother was at the peak of her courageous work. In 1907, two years after her mother's death Anna Jarvis organized the first “Mothers' Day” in Grafton so that the work of peacemaking and the war against poverty, which her mother waged, would not be forgotten.

Because carnations were her mother's favorite flower, she passed out 500 white carnations at her mother's church, St. Andrew's Methodist Episcopal Church in Grafton, West Virginia -- one for each mother in the congregation. The tradition was developed that wearing a white carnation is to honor a deceased mother, wearing a pink carnation is to honor a living mother.

Anna Jarvis worked full-time writing letters to politicians, clergy members, business leaders, women's clubs and anyone else she thought might have some influence to help establish an official national observance of Mother's Day. In 1914 the U.S. Congress passed a Joint Resolution, and President Woodrow Wilson signed it, establishing Mother's Day.

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that today there are about 82.5 million mothers in the United States, and according to statistics compiled by the Hallmark Card Company, about 96% of American

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Paying It Forward

**Help your parish avoid
the annual “summer slump.”**

Every summer the offering drops when parishioners are out of town for vacation, and for most folks, if we aren't present at Mass, obviously we aren't there to put our offertory in the basket. In the meantime, the bills and necessary expenses to carry on the parish ministry continue during the summer and must be paid.

THE SOLUTION! You plan ahead for your vacation and make reservations and send deposits for your hotel and other accommodations. In the same way, why not put the offering for the weeks you will be away in the offertory basket before you leave. Then you can enjoy your vacation with the clear conscience that the mission and ministry of the parish can continue unhindered as you enjoy your time of relaxation ■

The Anvil

Another "documentary" film (some have called it a *mockumentary*) was recently released which suggested that some stone ossuaries (bone boxes) may contain the remains of Jesus and his wife and child.

These archaeological relics were found near Jerusalem some twenty years ago, and it seems curious that the film should have been released just before Easter! Do you think there were any commercial considerations in the timing?

As several have noted, Jesus and Mary were the most common names in first century Judea, and how anyone can leap to the conclusion that these artifacts relate to Jesus of Nazareth and Mary Magdalene, and that she is his wife, is truly breath-taking.

It is shameless hype that the media should report these "findings" will "turn Christianity on its head" .

This is just one more feeble attempt to hammer away at the rock-solid foundation of the Christian faith that has withstood the

efforts of governments and skeptics over the centuries to undermine and destroy it.

Rome tried it. Voltaire tried it. Russia tried it. Bertrand Russel tried it.

ALL FAILED

The whole scenario reminds us of an old poem of John Clifford.

*Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime,
When looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.*

"How many anvils have you had," said I, "To wear and batter all these hammers so?"

"Just one," said he, then said with twinkling eye, "The anvil wears the hammer out, you know."

And so it is with the anvil of God's Word. For ages skeptic's blows have beat upon it, yet though all the noise of falling blows was heard, the anvil is unharmed – the hammers gone.

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MOTHER'S WORK DAY CLUBS

consumers will take part in some way in observing Mother's Day. Retailers report that Mother's Day is the second highest gift-giving holiday in the United States, second only to Christmas, and the busiest day of the year for most restaurants. It is also the peak day for long distance telephone calls.

How will you honor your Mother on this special day? Interestingly, over the years until her death in 1948, Anna Jarvis became increasingly concerned over the commercialization of Mother's Day: "I wanted it to be a day of sentiment, not profit." She opposed the use of greeting

cards saying they were, "a poor excuse for the letter you are too lazy to write."

So in the spirit of the founder of Mother's Day, Anna Jarvis, perhaps instead of merely sending a card, this year you might consider taking the time to write out a letter to your Mother, thanking her for all that she has done for you and taught you about living life. Thank her for the faith she instilled in you and the moral principals she gave you to live by.

Whether you wear a white or a pink carnation on Mother's Day, taking the time to write such a note to your Mother will be a fitting tribute and a wonderful way to honor the woman who gave you life■