

## ***“THE MATERNAL LOVE OF GOD” (5/9/10)***

**SCRIPTURES:** Deuteronomy 32: 1-14 & John 14: 23-29

**KEY CONCEPTS:** On this Mother’s Day 2010, we are reminded that God blesses us with mothers AND God can also be like a mother to those who feel/are “motherless”.

### **OPENING THOUGHTS:**

As we all know, words have power! What we say & what we read is internalized. And for better and worse, we often hold to ideas/concepts that may or may not work for us as we grow closer to God. So, on this Mother’s Day 2010, I invite you to join me as we imagine the possibilities of what God’s maternal instinct might look like for us.

### **WILL YOU PRAY WITH ME?**

### **PRAYER:**

### **EAGLE ILLUSTRATION:**

About thirteen years ago, as I was preparing to become clergy in Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), I was struggling with how to embody inclusive language for God. Up until that time, I’d only heard God referred to “as Father”. I knew it was important for me to wrestle with the de-construction of God “as Father” because intellectually I knew that God didn’t even have a gender; yet emotionally, I felt conflicted. You know – that it’s always been that way, why should we change it now syndrome. So...one day I prayed for help about it & within 48 hours I saw 2 very clear experiences about the need to inclusify our languaging for God.

The Biblical insight that I received came from today’s reading from Deuteronomy, chapter 32, verses 10-11. It came through the words that God “was like an eagle”, which got me to thinking about baby eaglets & mother eagles. Here are some factoids about baby eaglets & their mothers (& fathers): (**ONLINE READING :**)

- **Baby eagles:** Are small & helpless when hatched
- **Eagle parents:** Particularly mother eagles, take great care of the babies, feeding them as much as they’ll eat (which is a lot) because they’ll often grow from 3 ounces to roughly 7.5 pounds in 45 days. Constantly eating – bits of meat.
- **Nests:** Are built to last; used year after year by the same pair of eagles & then passed on to another pairing following their deaths; are made of large sticks with soft lining (leaves, etc.) for the baby eagles; additions are made every year, with some nests being as large as a small truck. Must be in a safe place – tall trees, sides of high cliff.
- **Egg Care:** Mother eagles will lay the eggs & sit on them for as long as 50 days. Sometimes the father eagle will also sit on the eggs. Once the baby eagle starts “calling, it takes about 15 hours for him/her to peck through the 1<sup>st</sup> hole. Another 35-40 hours to break completely out. Must rest after breaking out.
- **Flying:** Once hatched, it takes the baby eagles 65-75 days to prepare to fly.

(From: <http://www.kwic.com/~pagodavista/schoolhouse/species/birds/nesting.htm>)

### **GENERAL APPLICATION (ONLINE READING):**

When we think about the needs of the baby eagles & the vigilant commitment of the mother (& the father) eagles, we begin to imagine just how much care God offers us – as children of God.

1. Like baby eagles, much work had to be done BEFORE we ever made it to our births.
2. Like baby eagles, we are sometimes helpless & totally dependent on God for our very survival.
3. Like baby eagles, we must trust not only the process of birth, life & maturity – we also

will hopefully realize that not only is God like a mother eagle, but that God also places other care givers in our lives – all along the way – because God does love us.

4. Like a mother eagle, God is wise enough to know when we need to take the next step in our development. Even baby eagles have to leave the nest at some point.

**Flying:** One of my favorite stories about baby eagles learning to fly is found in verse 11. Usually the mother eagle will “stir up the nest” which rearranges the soft lining of the nest, so that the baby eagles now feel the rough edges of the larger sticks. The nest becomes less comfortable. Then one by one, the mother eagle will take an eaglet up on her wings, flying really high (maybe even 5,000 feet up or more). Then she’ll tip her wings & allow the baby eagle to slide off – in a free fall—downward. Before the eaglet falls to close to the ground, she’ll swoop down & catch the eagle. She repeats this process until the baby eagle learns to fly.

### **TRANSITION:**

So on this special day, for our mothers, what might this all mean for us – as children & as mothers? Well, I imagine the message may be different for each of us. Each person in this room is in a different stage/season of life. For example some of us are adult children that **need less maternal attention**; while some of us are still young children who **need more of our mother’s attention**. AND maybe some of us – here this morning – **feel motherless**.

I am reminded of a verse from Isaiah 49:15. *“Can a woman forget the nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even those these (women) may forget, yet I (God) will not forget you. (V. 16) See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands; you are continually before me.”*

### **GOSPEL READING – JOHN 14: 23-29: (ONLINE)**

And speaking of feeling alone, in today’s Gospel reading, Jesus is working to prepare His disciples for the changes that were coming. The change that would cause Him to transition from an everyday presence to a spiritual presence that would still comfort, teach & advocate for them.

And even in the midst of transition, change & some would say a huge loss; Jesus promised His followers a peace that is far greater than anything the world can offer.

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled & do not let them be afraid.*

### **CLOSING:**

Therefore, on this Mother’s Day, 2010, may you experience the loving presence & peace of Christ & may the God who is both Mother & Father comfort you. And may those of you who are mothers experience the maternal love of God as you “mother your child (ren)”. And for those who have lost their mother, may you experience God’s remembering of you & may you feel secure – in the palm of God’s hands. Amen.