MOTHER

Everyone's mother is SPECIAL, and rightly so. We owe our physical as well as social and spiritual (to an extent) being to our mother. At a time when our minds are easily influenced and molded, our mothers taught us earliest the meaning of right and wrong, courtesy and respect for others – especially our elders – and a love and regard for the great Being to whom we owe our Creation.

When just a toddler I can remember my mother going about her daily chores singing many of the great old hymns of the Church. They still ring in my mind's ear today….What a Friend we have in Jesus…..Alas, and did my Saviour Bleed…..At the Cross…..In the Garden…..Love lifted me…..Abide with me…..The Church's one Foundation…..Onward Christian Soldiers…..Amazing Grace…..and on, and on. Their beautiful words and melody have sustained me when times were difficult, and they have called me back home when I was oft a prodigal.

When I could barely speak and understand, my precious mother would sit me on her knee and tell me about Jesus. I did not understand her explanation of why He died for me, but I knew that He did it out of an unknowable love because mother had said it. When I asked her where I came from, she answered from heaven…..and I believed it. We came from His Holy Presence as He had fashioned our members in the womb, from the Father, "trailing," as Longfellow has said, "clouds of glory."

I later went off to West Point and later to the service. I wandered away from some of the lessons my mother taught me. But ever in my memory were her words and her songs. Always and hauntingly they came back to my mind as consoling angels. My mother taught me that character mattered, that purity in all matters affecting life was the rule, and that love was greater than all else.

In May of 1991, my mother was taken to the hospital with chest pains. The physician did not consider them life-threatening, but admitted her to a private room for observation. That night my mother suffered a massive heart attack which destroyed much of her heart. The Doctor told us that she only had about 23% of usage left in her heart and that her outlook was grim. If she survived, she would never again be able to work in her treasured flower gardens or do anything else of note. I knew mother would not be happy in that sad state.

On the Saturday night before her death, she asked me, "Son, will you pray that I go easy?" I tried to make light of her comment and told her she would be fine, but she insisted. I did pray that the Lord would allow my mother's passing to be 'easy' and painless. Sunday morning, the Doctor called us in for an impromptu meeting. We feared the worst – and got it! The physician had gone in to see my mother around 10:00 A.M. on Sunday morning. She was in a light-hearted mood and responded to the doctor's joking comments with a smile. He said that as he reached up to get the attendant's chart, he looked back down at my mother and realized she was gone. Just like that! His heroic attempts at reviving here were futile. But mother had a great day beyond our knowing. She had gone to be with her Lord, Redeemer and Saviour – on Mother's Day.

Bishop Jerry L. Ogles
The Anglican Orthodox Church