

The Mother Of Us All

It was pleasing to see the high profile and promotion of Mothers Day in the Caribbean last month (9th May 2004). It was a day, which allowed us to give conscious acknowledgment to our own mother and celebrate mothers throughout the land. It was a special time to give recognition, show gratitude and shower our mother with love and affection as a way of demonstrating our sincere thanks for all the love and care she has shown us throughout our lives.

Mothers are very special; they carry us for 9 months experiencing pain and discomfort yet as soon as we are born they give us unconditional love and nurture our development from babies to children to adults. There is nothing quite like a mothers love and most of us realise that mothers deserve thanks and praise not just on Mothering Sunday but everyday. However whilst many of us find that it natural to have a close bond with our mothers I wondered how many of us give attention and care to the mother of us all – Mother Earth?

Mother Earth is our life source and sustenance and nature provides for all our needs. She is abundant and life giving; we eat from her, drink from her, are clothed and sheltered by her. Everyday we are given unconditional love in the form of the sun and the moon, the air, the water and all other elements and life forms, which make up a delicate and complex ecosystem. As far as we know Earth is the only planet capable of sustaining life – a gem in a dark universe, an oasis in an infinite galaxy. Yet despite the blessings she constantly bestows upon us the majority of people on the planet continually treat her with disrespectful, uncaring and ignorant attitudes. Behaviour that we would be shamed and disgusted to see directed at our mothers and Grandmothers seems to be seen as acceptable and justifiable when directed at our Mother Earth.

We use her without replenishing and take without giving. We pollute and rape our mother earth through intensive chemically based agriculture, destruction of rainforests, pollution of our seas and rivers, relentless wars and disregard for the well-being of all other plants and animals that have been created to share this planet with us. We ransack her harvest and greedily devour her resources through un-sustained growth and consumerism. Whilst it is acceptable as a helpless child to take from our mothers without being able to give her anything more in return than a smile or gurgle we grow to realise that as with all relationships we have to give as well as take. Unfortunately it seems that we lack the maturity to apply this same philosophy to Mother Earth and take steps to conserve and replenish.

A love that a mother has for her child enables her to endure sleepless nights, to deprive herself before she would ever see her child go without, and as one mother of a 4 week old child recently commented to me “I never knew the love I would feel for my child. I’d die for him to be okay” The earth in the same way never sleeps and is constantly giving. Yet we must now realise we have come to the point where we have taken so much that she really hasn’t got much left to give. A child who loses their mother is pained, hurt maybe even traumatised but they can, and do, survive. The difference between our earth mother and our mother earth is that if the latter dies then so will we. A child will grow and gain a certain amount of independence from their mother but we never lose our dependence on mother

earth. Our physical tie to our mother may be cut at birth but the great umbilical cord of life always remains intact and keeps us physically bonded to mother earth. As we are killing the earth we are killing ourselves.

Our immediate biological families are important. Maybe not everyone has a wonderful relationship with their mum but generally it is acknowledged and held as a societal value that we respect our mothers. In our families most of us seek to correct a sibling that behaves inappropriately towards our mother. For Mother Earth every human being on the planet is her son or daughter. In the interconnected web of life we are all brothers and sisters – one big global family responsible for caring for our mother. What a brother or sister does to our mother affects us and what we do to our mother affects others. The bible tells us ‘That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whence one member suffer, all the members suffer with it or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it’ (1 Corinthians 12:25-26) With this perspective we then have a greater responsibility to treat our Mother Earth well and ensure that our lifestyle does not impact on the rights of others to enjoy their mother/child relationship.

So what do we do to show care? What’s the solution? Saving the planet may seem like an overwhelming task but we have the ability to create a difference through the simple choices we make everyday. It has been shown that if everyone lived the lifestyle of the average American we would need another 6 planets to support our consumption! Now is the time for people throughout the world to re-evaluate their needs and begin to live more simply and sustainably. It is time to examine and renew our relationship with our Mother Earth and find ways in which we can help, honour and respect her. This starts with a willingness to become aware about the wider consequences of our everyday actions and beginning to make conscious choices. (From the products you use in the home and garden, the food you buy, the car you drive – all these choices have an environmental impact.) We need to become aware of the issues affecting our environment and in the same way you would sit and listen to the problems of your own mum, why not ask Mother Earth how she needs your help today and what you can do to make things better.

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Post Script

World Environment Day was celebrated on 5th June. There are many groups in Dominica working for the preservation of the environment. The Environmental Co-ordinating unit has worked to put on a series of events and information to raise public awareness of environmental issues. For more information on how you can be a part of environmental conservation and change in Dominica contact them on 448 2401 ext 3456