

Chalkboard

By

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Mother's Day is this coming Sunday, May 11, 2008. There is a fun site at <http://www.mothersdaycelebration.com/> where I found this little tidbit of history about Mother's Day. "Mother's Day is celebrated to honor all mothers and express gratitude for the hardships they bear in bringing up a child. Most countries including US, Australia, Canada and India celebrate Mothers Day on the second Sunday of May. Mother's Day came into being due to the efforts made by Ms Julia Ward Howe and Ms Anna Jarvis. The Resolution for having a dedicated "Mother's Day" was signed by US President Woodrow Wilson on May 8, 1914. Since then people across the world have been celebrating Mothers Day with joy and devotion."

In my own life I am fortunate to have a wonderful mother. I am doubly blessed in that Regenia's mother treats me like a son as well. If there is such a thing as a triple blessing, then I have it in Regenia being the mother of our sons.

My list could go on and on. There are other women in my childhood, teenage years, and adult life that have played or do play some mother role in my life. Many of those dear ladies are family; some are not. There are birth mothers, and there are real mothers, and the two are not always the same.

A good mother is a priceless treasure. There is a bond of love between a mother and her offspring that only death can break. It is more than maternal instinct; it is a state of being. Good mothers are willing to sacrifice their own needs, desires, and ambitions for the well being of their children. Some version of an old saying says it best, "A father works from sun to sun, but a mother's work is never done!"

What does this little treatise have to do with being in an article that purports itself to be educational in nature? I offer the following answer- *in loco parentis*. If you are a Chalkboard reader, you have seen me use the term on several occasions. It simply is a Latin term meaning "in place of a parent". I would maintain that many a female classroom teacher, especially at the lower grade levels, often has a daytime role of being mother to the students she teachers. However, it is not just an elementary attribute. At school, mother-types are found behind secretarial desks, in the lunch serving line, behind the wheel of a bus, standing before a chalkboard, pushing a mop, etc.. All are paid by the district to perform some education related function, but money cannot buy the extra attention and care that so many provide.

Many, if not most, of these day mothers have a night mother role at their

own home as well. It may be Pythagorean Theorem by day but it may be laundry or grocery shopping or ballgames or seeing that teeth are brushed before bed time by night.

Why is the concept of *in loco parentis* important? In my mind it is important because teachers do not teach subject matter, teachers teach somebody's children. And while "tough love" may be a necessary part of any mother's repertoire, it begs acceptance of the premise that love means seeking out the best for those you care about without regard to form.

I am thankful that my mother cares about me. I am thankful that Regenia's mother does too as well as all those others in my life who have been or still are a parting of "my raising".

As your school's superintendent, I am thankful also that there are many good mothers working each day caring for the students whose mothers have trusted into our care.

Mother's Day- Sunday, May 11, 2008.