

## A TRIBUTE TO MOTHERS

The young mother set her foot on the path of life. "Is this the long way?" She asked. And the guide said "Yes, and the way is hard. And you will be old before you reach the end of it. But the end will be better than the beginning."

But the young mother was happy, and she would not believe that anything could be better than these years. So she played with her children, she fed them and bathed them, and taught them how to tie their shoe-laces and ride a bike and reminded them to feed the dog and do their homework and brush their teeth.

The sun shone on them, and the young mother cried, "Nothing will ever be lovelier than this."

Then the nights came, and the storms, and the path was sometimes dark, and the children shook with fear and cold and the mother drew them close and covered them with her arms and the children said, "Mother, we are not afraid, for you are near, and no harm can come."

And the morning came, and there was a hill ahead, and the children climbed and grew weary, and the mother was weary. But at all times she said to the children, "a little patience and we are there".

So the children climbed, and as they climbed they learned to weather the storms. And with this, she gave them strength to face the world. Year after year, she showed them compassion, understanding, hope, but most of all ... unconditional love.

And when they reached the top they said, "Mother, we would not have done it without you."

The days went on, and the weeks and the months and the years, and the mother grew old and she became little and bent. But her children were tall and strong, and walked with courage. And the mother, when she lay down at night, looked up at the stars and said, "This is a better day than the last, for my children have learned so much and are now passing these traits on to their children."

And when the way became rough for her, they lifted her, and gave her their strength, just as she had given them hers. One day they came to a hill, and beyond the hill, they could see a shining road and golden gates flung wide.

And mother said: "I have reached the end of my journey. And now I know the end is better than the beginning, for my children can walk with dignity and pride, with their heads held high, and so can their children after them."

And the children said, "you will always walk with us, Mother, even when you have gone through the gates."

And they stood and watched her as she went on alone and the gates closed after her. And they said: "We cannot see her, but she is with us still. A Mother like ours is more than a memory. She is living presence."

Your Mother is always with you. She's the whisper of the leaves as you walk down the street, she's the smell of certain foods you remember, flowers you pick and perfume that she wore, she's the cool hand on your brow when you're not feeling well. She's your breath in the air on a cold winter's day. She is the sound of the rain that lulls you to sleep, the colours of a rainbow, she is Christmas morning.

Your Mother lives inside your laughter. And she's crystallized in every tear drop. A mother shows every emotion ... happiness, sadness, fear, jealousy, love, hate, anger helplessness, excitement, joy, sorrow ... and all the while hoping and praying you will only know the good feelings in life. She's the place you came from. Your first home, and she's the map you follow with every step you take. She's your first love, your first friend, even your first enemy, but nothing on earth can separate you. Not time, not space ... not even death!