

## The Origins of Mother's Day: A Call for Peace

Mother's Day was founded for mourning women to remember fallen soldiers and work for peace. In the 1850s, West Virginia women's organizer Ann Reeves Jarvis held Mother's Day work clubs to improve sanitary conditions and try to lower infant mortality. The groups also tended wounded soldiers from both sides during the US Civil War, 1861-1865.

In the postwar years Jarvis and other women organized Mother's Friendship Day picnics and other events as pacifist strategies to unite former foes. Julia Ward Howe, best known as the composer of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," issued a widely read "Mother's Day Proclamation" in 1870, calling for women to take an active political role in promoting peace.

### Julia Ward Howe's Proclamation, 1870

**Arise, all women who have hearts**, whether your baptism be that of water or of tears! Say firmly: "We will not have great questions decided by irrelevant agencies, our husbands shall not come to us, reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause.

**"Our sons shall not be taken** from us to unlearn all that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy and patience. We women of one country will be too tender of those of another country to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs."

**From the bosom of** the devastated earth a voice goes up with our own. It says, "Disarm, disarm! The sword is not the balance of justice." Blood does not wipe out dishonor nor violence indicate possession.

**As men have often** forsaken the plow and the anvil at the summons of war, let women now leave all that may be left of home for a great and earnest day of counsel. Let them meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead. Let them then solemnly take counsel with each other as to the means whereby the great human family can live in peace, each learning after his own time, the sacred impress, not of Caesar, but of God.

**In the name of womanhood** and of humanity, I earnestly ask that a general congress of women without limit of nationality may be appointed and held at some place deemed most convenient and at the earliest period consistent with its objects, to promote the alliance of the different nationalities, the amicable settlement of international questions, the great and general interests of peace.

**Happy Mother's Day to All Who Seek Peace and Justice!**

*From the New Haven Sunday Vigil, Sunday, May 12, 2019*

*Join our vigil to RESIST THIS ENDLESS WAR every Sunday, 12-1pm,*

*Broadway, Park and Elm Streets, New Haven:*

<https://Newhavensundayvigil.wordpress.com>

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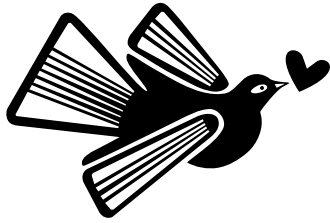
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# Mother's Day

## 2019 Peace Proclamation

By Rivera Sun

**Instead of flowers, give us peace. Instead of brunch, end the wars.** Let no more mothers raise their children to kill other mothers' children. **Give us, instead, the abolition of war, the promotion of peace, and the care of people and planet.**

Each day, the cruelties of war demand the blood sacrifice of mothers' children, young and old, civilian and soldier, foreign and domestic. Each day, the greed of the war machine siphons off our wealth and drains away that which should have nourished life and prosperity for all. Each day, the militaries of the world ravage and pollute the fragile ecosystems of our one and only home. Each day, humanity hurtles closer to annihilation by means of nuclear weapons and climate crisis.

**It is time to say no more! To refuse to go along with this insanity.** To put down our foot, each and everyone, and reject the military's demand for blood sacrifices in all their many forms. Neither the flesh of our flesh, nor the children of other mothers, nor the prosperity of our labors, nor the Earth's vitality should be sacrificed to the false idols of war.

**We cry for the abolition of war.** We cry for the ending of all drafts (both through lottery and poverty). We demand the return of private and public wealth to economies of peace. We call for the demilitarization of every sector of our societies from our streets to the police to our economy to the spread of military bases around the globe. We, the mothers and the children of mothers, demand

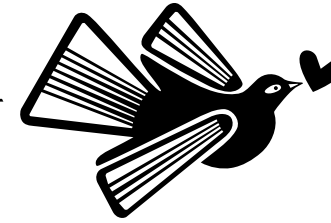
respect for our common mother, the Earth, and for the end of the military's violations of her being.

**To commemorate Mother's Day without demanding these changes rings flat. It becomes a celebration of hollow words and vacuous platitudes, tunnel vision and callous blind spots.**

For every mother dining with her children, there are two other mothers' children trying to kill each other. For every mother smelling the roses, there is another mother wailing over the body of her child. For every mother strolling beside her college-bound son, there is another mother's son conscripted by poverty and injustice. For every mother appreciating the beauty of the spring, there is another mother screaming under the terror of bombs and bullets. For every mother savoring breakfast in bed, there is another mother hungry and unhoused, stateless and fleeing from war.

**We, the mothers and the children of mothers, stand united against war and united for well-being of people and planet.**

**On this Mother's Day, 2019, let us promise to protect all children and our imperiled planet. Let no mother's child kill another mother's child.** Let every mother stand against war. Let every mother call for peace. Let every mother's cry be heard. This Mother's Day, instead of flowers, give us peace. Instead of brunch, end the wars.



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