

The Most Precious Time



I've been alive long enough that I can look back on many paths my life has taken. I've been a reporter in the turbulent 1960's, taught English and journalism at a Catholic girls' high school, worked as an addictions and mental health counselor, was a therapist with hurting children and families, and now a pastoral associate at St. Leo's where it is a privilege to be part of our wonderfully diverse faith-filled community.

But all that is nothing at all in comparison to the most important career I ever had—that of being a mom. As any mother will tell you it's a job that both fills and breaks your heart that draws on joys and strengths you didn't think were possible, and is a life-time commitment.

I remember all the plans I had when I was pregnant with my first child. I'd have the baby, be back to teaching in three weeks, and my life would go on as usual. I remember biting my lip as I saw friends putting breakables up high and curtailing their social life once they became parents. Obviously they were doing it wrong. My child, I told myself, would adapt to my routine and not the other way around.

How wrong I was! The moment I held my infant son in my arms, snuggled him, and gazed into his eyes I felt a love that no words can describe and everything changed though I hadn't seen it coming—and now, I realize, I wouldn't have had it any other way. I was blessed to be able to be home with my children until my youngest was in grade school. I remember my first vacation after I returned to work. "It's the best week of the year," my daughter told me. "We're all together." I recalled what my dad told me

shortly after he retired from a job that required him to work six days and three evenings a week. "The most important thing in life is relationships," he said. Obviously my seven-year-old understood this.

Now as a grandmother of four grandsons I watch my own children parenting. Through challenges with prematurity and autism, I ache with their pains, marvel at their courage, and rejoice in their victories.

Mothering can be more than biological, I've discovered as I had the opportunity to supervise interns and watch them mature. Some still refer to me as "intern mom" and now I'm "intern grandma" for one of them. Some of the best "mothers" I know have never borne children of their own but have loved, cherished, advocated for, encouraged, and poured out their lives for children who were in their classrooms, neighborhoods, hospital beds, rec centers, therapy rooms, and the countless places where children need safe caring adults.

It seems in that our often fractious fast-paced society we all are in need of people who will hold us close, work with us and tell us that all will be okay. We need that secure place where we are seen and known at our core—that place we first knew in our mother's arms.

We need to make space for mothering time like that. We need to slow down. We need to make that kind of caring for each other a priority. An embroidery project I cross-stitched when my children were young shows a mother rocking her child with the saying: "Cleaning and scrubbing can wait till tomorrow for babies grow up we've learned to our sorrow. So quiet down cobwebs dust go to sleep. I'm rocking my baby and babies don't keep."

— Angela Anno

Are you a People Person? Retired?

Looking for something worthy to do?

Need a little excitement in your life?

Looking for a new challenge?

Do you have a spouse/partner/friend that you would like to share the job with? That's fine too!

**Part-time Volunteer Opportunity
at St. Leo Food Pantry**

St. Leo Food Pantry is seeking a VOLUNTEER assistant administrator, 9-12 hours/week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons, to manage inventory control and onsite volunteer communications. Now that our procedures are well established and skillfully run, we need someone to help oversee and maintain operations. If you (and a teammate) are interested, please contact Stephanie Sepate, Pantry Administrator, at 513-921-1044 ext. 30



"She (The Blessed Virgin Mary) is the Mother of mercy, because she bore in her womb the very Face of divine mercy, Jesus, ... The Son of God, made incarnate for our salvation, has given us his Mother, who joins us on our pilgrimage through this life, so that we may never be left alone, especially at times of trouble and uncertainty."

—Pope Francis