

## Lenten Devotion - Jesus Redefines "Family"

---

*"Woman, here is your son." - John 19:26*

This Lenten season I have again been reflecting upon Jesus' last days on earth and especially that last day on the cross. John describes in the 19th chapter a distressing situation at the foot of the cross. Mary (the mother of Jesus), her sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas – possibly a friend and follower of Jesus), Mary Magdalen and John are gathered together "near the cross" watching as Jesus was crucified. They also witness the humiliating act of Jesus' clothes being taken from him and gambled away amongst the soldiers.

In the midst of this gruesome scene and in the midst of agonizing, death producing pain, Jesus reaches out to his mother one final time. Using his eyes to look between his Mother and John, since he can not move his hands to point, Jesus says, "Woman, here is your son." He then looks at "the disciple whom he loved" (whom we believe to be John) and said, "Here is your mother." In this act Jesus redefined family for us and in many ways helped teach us how to be the church. As the Body of Christ we adopt each other into our care! We truly treat each other like "family." We often times even call ourselves the "Family of God!"

That day Mary nor John were by themselves. Friends and other family came together to witness the final hours of Jesus' life. Mary's sister, Clopas' wife, Mary Magdalen, and John all walked with Jesus' Mother to offer support, love, care, and a real shoulder as this day was to unfold. What does it mean to be the church? We stick by each other even when things, especially when things, get messy. We stick by each other, even when it is not emotionally easy to help, be present or even find any good in the situation. We hold fast to one another through thick and thin, in good times and bad, in life and in death! This is what it means to be the church!

Even in death, Jesus offered each one of us life by gifting us with the "Family of God!" And especially during this time of "safer at home" we feel the tug and pull and need for our "Family" even more. Your prayers for one another, your calls to one another, your shopping trips and chalk notes on the drive way are all ways that you are sticking together, even when apart. These are all ways that you are supporting one another and offering a virtual shoulder to cry on when needed.

I sometimes imagine prayers as doves flying from my home to yours while I am praying for you. I offer this image to you, especially now, if you are feeling isolated and alone, anxious or fearful. Know that there are so many different prayer teams at our church praying over each and every one of you! And with each prayer, a dove lights on your roof top and gently offers it's presence of peace and good will! May you stay safe! And know ... you, my "Family of God" are in my prayers today for peace and good will! Thank you Jesus for giving us "family!"

*Hope & Peace,*

**Rev. Dr. Deborah Suddarth**

*Executive Pastor*

*Reaching out to transform lives by extending God's love to all.*  
[www.colliervilleumc.org](http://www.colliervilleumc.org)

