

Commentary: A chain of love—mother to mother to mother

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I have black-and-white pictures of a beautiful teenage girl wearing a simple dress and a look on her face that says, “I love life and can’t wait to live more of it.”

Pictures are true, but they are not the whole truth. This girl had not experienced an easy life. She grew up picking cotton in the hot East Texas sun and helping care for her two younger sisters. You can see nothing of the hardship in the photo; all you can see is joy and emerging maturity. There is a reason for both—her mother.

✘ Ferrell Foster Hilda Noble, the teenager, had a mother who country folk would call a saint. Ruby Noble lived a very hard life, but she gave her six children, including Hilda, something beyond difficulty in which to hope. She gave them love.

I came to know Ruby later, but she lived and loved more like Jesus than anyone I ever met. You will not be surprised to learn Ruby had a saint of a mother herself—Lillie. And you probably would not be surprised to also learn Ruby’s daughter, Hilda, grew up to be a saintly mother, as well. Lillie to Ruby to Hilda—mother to mother to mother,

These are the women who shaped my early life, for they are my great-grandmother, grandmother and mother. My mother, Hilda, is the one who had the most direct impact on me, but I know she was part of this magnificent human chain.

Angel of light

My mother populates my childhood memories like an angel of light. In those recollections, she is sitting beside me at the dining room table, helping me with my fourth-grade homework when I want only to give up. She is telling me God has something special for me to do when I feel like the world's biggest failure. She is giving me a paddling for doing something wrong. She and Dad are leading me to follow Christ simply by being good people, not perfect ones or great ones in the eyes of the world, but good ones who love me even when I disobey.

Every child needs a mom in his or her life. Some, like me, are blessed with one by birth, others get a mom through adoption, and still others have someone who fills the role of mom without the official title. We need moms because we need nurture, care, correction, direction, hugs, advice and more from the unique and powerful perspective of a woman.

Emptying one's life for another

And when we think of all it means to be a mom, we think of giving, of emptying one's life for another.

Hilda Noble Foster is quite simply the kindest, most giving person I know. She no longer is the teenager in the black-and-white photo; she is much more.

I will honor her personally in a number of ways on Mother's Day, but I can honor her in an even deeper way if I reflect her kindness and giving spirit by giving to meet the needs of others. Hilda Foster is one of my heroes; I will give to the Texas Baptist Hunger Offering on Mother's Day because my mom has been giving to me my entire life. She loves, and it shows. I love, and it should show.

Texas Baptists are seeking to raise \$1 million this Mother's Day to help end

hunger in Texas and around the globe through the Texas Baptist Hunger Offering. For more information, including an opportunity to give, visit the [1day1million](#) website.

-Ferrell Foster is interim director of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission.