I am sensitive to the fact
    That for some Mother’s Day is not easy.

Some didn’t have good mothers.
    And their memories are not altogether positive.

Others have recently had mothers pass away
    And Mother’s Day reminds them of their loss.

And still others never had a chance to become a mother.

For various reasons, Mother’s Day is not a day
    Some look forward to . . . and I get that!

But let me say this . . . we were all children of mothers!

And one of the traits of a child
    Is the desire to be noticed!

You ever notice that?

“Hey, Dad, watch me!
    Watch me, Mom.”
    Over and over, and over again.

And the attentive Mom or Dad stop what there’re doing
    And watch their children, over and over and over again.

The flip side of that coin is mothers often feel invisible.

If you are a stay-at-home mother
    Much of your day is spent alone
    Much of your work goes unnoticed.
“The God Who Sees Me”

And when your family does come home
   Even then they don’t see you.

Hilary Price, from the People's Church Toronto
   Describes it this way:

It all began to make sense—the blank stares, the lack of response, the way one of the kids will walk into the room while I am on the phone and ask to be taken to the store. And inside I’m thinking, Can’t you see? I am on the phone. Obviously not. No one can see if I’m on the phone or cooking, or sweeping the floor or even standing on my head in the corner because no one can see me at all. I am invisible.

Many mothers feel nobody sees them
   Nobody understands them
   Nobody cares . . . .

Hagar, in our story today, felt much the same . . .
   Confused, misused, and abused.

The story of Hagar is not your typical Mother’s Day story.

She is not a heroine like Deborah.
   But she, too, is a mother in the Bible.
She is a maidservant to Sarai, a slave from Egypt.

Her life is not her own!

She didn’t choose to be Sarai’s personal slave.

She didn’t choose to live her life
   Shackled to the demands of her owners.

Nor did she choose to bear a child
For Abram and Sarai’s barren relationship.

All of this forced upon her by the society she lived in.

Much like so many black slaves by their white owners
In our own shameful history.

It’s no wonder then when she was found pregnant
That she felt hostility toward her master.

But all that did was to make matters worse.

And so she did what slaves do . . . she ran away.

It’s the same with the “Wives of Boko Haram.”

Abducted from their homes
Forced to become slave/wives to terrorists.

They, too, if given a chance flee.
It’s not easy to be a mother in those conditions.

The conversation between God and Hagar
Is the longest recorded conversation
Between God and a woman in the OT.

Hagar is also the only woman in the Bible who names God.

She names God, El Roi, in Hebrew, meaning
“the God who sees me.”

Here Hagar flees from an untenable situation
And runs smack-dab into God.
As Hilary Price writes

*Hagar doesn’t know what she wants. She knows what she doesn’t want. She doesn’t want to be treated as a nonperson, as an invisible person. She doesn’t realize what her greatest need is until she meets the God who meets that need. And she names him, El Roi, the God who sees me.*

~~

The Bible lists several names for God.

- Eloim—the Creator God
- Yahweh—the Covenant-maker God
- El Shaddai—the Almighty God.

But truth be known

- These names carry little meaning to someone who has never experienced the presence of God.

The names are too far removed from present circumstances to be relevant or significant. But how about—El Roi—the God who sees me?

What effect might El Roi have on someone like Hagar?

What effect might El Roi have on an enslaved pregnant girl who flees into the night to escape from Boko Haram?

All alone in the wilderness . . .

- How would it be if God meets her there?

What effect would it have

- If God met her at her point of need like God did for Hagar?
“The God Who Sees Me”

It would make all the difference in the world.

It would give her the courage to carry on
Knowing God was seeing her through it.

There’s something so important about the need to be seen.

William Tammeus said, You don’t really understand human nature unless you know why a child on a merry-go-round will wave at his parents every time around—and why his parents will always wave back.

Zherina is in gymnastics
And after every single routine
She always looks our way for recognition.

And if I don’t have my face in the phone
I always give her the thumbs up!
To be noticed is so vital . . .
It creates a sense of belonging
A sense of love and acceptance
A sense of value.

And how much more significant then
When it is God noticing you.

Psalm 139 (CEV) You have looked deep into my heart, Lord, and you know all about me.
2 You know when I am resting or when I am working, and from heaven you discover my thoughts. 3 You notice everything I do and everywhere I go.

Psalm 139:15-16 (CEV) 15 Nothing about me is hidden from you! I was secretly woven together deep in the
earth below, 16 but with your own eyes you saw my body being formed. Even before I was born, you had written in your book everything I would do.

Hagar, the immigrant from Africa
An Egyptian slave to Jewish masters
    Had no value . . .

Except for what tasks she performed for her masters
A slave to do their bidding . . .

Go collect firewood
    Go fetch water
        Cook the meal
        Wash the clothes
Be there for your master in the middle of the night.

Could anyone feel less insignificant
Than what Hagar experienced
    As a slave/wife to Abraham and Sarah?

And yet in her darkest most fearful hour
The God of all Creation comforts her
And everything changes . . .

She IS significant
    She IS valued
        She BELONGS to God.

And so mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers

What difference will it make to know
    That God sees and is present with you?
“The God Who Sees Me”

What difference might it make to each of us
As we leave this place today to go our separate ways?

What difference will it make the day you might be
Lying in that hospital bed with nobody around you
As you breathe your last breath

What difference does it make
That your God,
Eloim,
El Shaddai,
El Roi is there?

It makes all the difference in the world.

Hagar longed to be loved and valued
No one around her would satisfy that need . . .
God did.

~~
Let’s make sure that doesn’t happen to our loved ones.

When your children demand your attention
Look at me, Dad! Look at me, Mom!

Look at them . . .
Even if it is a hundred times a day.

Look at them because they need to know
There are loved and cared for.

Let them know they are of value and deeply loved.
~~
One of things that I have learned
In reading about some of the mothers
“The God Who Sees Me”

Whose girls were abducted by Boko Haram

Is the comfort they have in knowing two things:

First of all, knowing that God in Christ
Is there with their girls watching over them.

Knowing that if, ultimately, their lives are taken
They would not be forsaken
But to go and be with the Lord.

And secondly, these mothers are given comfort
Knowing there are people throughout the world
Praying specifically for their children.

God knows them . . .
God sees them . . .
God loves them.

We know them
We pray for them
We love them!

May El Roi, the God who sees you, and you, and me
Be with us now and in our time of need.