

A dozen years ago, I was riding in a car with my parents. We were driving to the Navy recruiting station. I was going to boot camp. We didn't say much in the car. And when we got to the parking lot, it was early. Those week before had been a bit tense. Getting things together. Saying good-byes. For the first time in years, I was living again with my parents. And we had argued. In the car on that cold February day, it was a bit tense.

So I got out, and I planned on walking through the door. I was in a hurry to begin this new chapter in my life. I heard my mom's voice from behind me call out, "Come here."

I stopped. And I turned around. And I saw that she was crying. I walked over to her. And she hugged me. She hugged me like she'd never hugged me before. She ... well ... she was holding onto me real tight. And she kissed me over and over. She was holding onto me like she wasn't going to let go.

At the time, it was awkward. But that memory has remained with me all of these years.

In the second or third century B. C. someone wrote ...

O [God,] my heart is not proud
nor haughty my eyes.
I have not gone after things too great
nor marvels beyond me.

Truly I have set my soul
in silence and peace.
As a child has rest in its mother's arms,
even so is my soul.

O [my people], hope in [God]
both now and forever.

These words speak to me of God's tender love.

And at the same time, these words speak to me of my mother's love.

The image I have in my mind is of God holding onto me ... holding onto each one of us,
and loving us, and not letting go.

And when God calls out, "Come here;" we go ... into a new chapter ... into a new life.

Like a child ... at rest ... in the arms of its mother.

In silence ... and in peace.

Hope in God, my sisters. Hope in God, my brothers.

Hope in God ... both now and forever.