

Blessed Volunteers

My mother, Rebecca Hunter, taught her three sons the value of helping others whenever possible. It was no surprise, then, when she became a volunteer at Cookeville General Hospital. It was a role that she relished, and whatever the weather conditions, she found a way to make it to the hospital.

"What drives you so?" I once asked her. "I want to do whatever I can to make somebody else's life just a little better," she responded.

I believe her answer is one that the thousands of volunteers within the centers of Life Care and American Lifestyles would give.

In tribute to them -- and to my mother, who has been dead since 1999 -- here is a poem that has a message about their reward:

"Many will be shocked to find ... When the day of judgment nears ... That there's a special place in heaven ... Set aside for volunteers ... Furnished with big recliners ... Satin couches and footstools ... When there's no committee chairmen ... No group leaders or carpools ... No eager team that needs a coach ... No bazaar and no bake sale ... There will be nothing to staple ... Not one thing to fold or mail ... Telephone lists will be outlawed ... But a finger snap will bring ... Cold drinks and gourmet dinners ... And treats fit for a king ... You ask, 'Who'll serve these privileged few ... And work for all they're worth?' ... Why, all those who reaped the benefits ... And not once volunteered on Earth."

How about hugging, and thanking, a volunteer today?

--Beecher Hunter