

Dear mothers and grandmothers!

Today, I wish to talk about the bond that mothers use to bind together a nation and a family. The bond of lasting values that mothers use to bind together generations, the bond that keeps humanity and trust alive.

Last year, on Mother's Day, I was concerned in my talk about Estonian women who are too often left alone with their troubles, the problems of their family and loved ones.

I said that we must with much greater ardour seek and even claim the joys concealed in every single day: the joy of doing things together, the joy of continuity and the joy of friendship.

I said, also, that men should seek knowledge and take better care of their health, so that they may remain the apple of their wives' and mothers' eye a little longer.

Today, dear mothers in this hall and outside it, these words are just as vital. Even more so than they were a year ago.

These days, many people are losing their jobs. We are faced with a question: how to construe ourselves, how to value ourselves, if all the notches on the ruler of values seem to be vanishing: progressing wealth, headlong pursuit of welfare, a tumultuous rush after something that today has vanished like wildfire. What if all this has disappeared or is about to disappear?

This is a question that I would like to answer as a family man, not as the President. Why?

Lasting values do not grow in economy, or in consumption or production. They grow elsewhere. In families, in the knowledge of the soul, in mutual trust. All the rest is based on those. And the stronger our basic values, the better and safer is all the rest.

Ever since babyhood, Estonian children learn their three basic truths from their mothers: be nice to your playmates, do well at school, and be open and dignified with your fellow humans and demand the same of them.

These are practical skills. Their value grows with time. Let us have a look at Estonia today, at the time of crisis. What else except be nice to your playmates can we recommend to today's politicians in the Riigikogu and the Government?

Hard times, tight times often bring quarrels. But quarrels bring no solutions, answer no questions, and bring us no ease.

This is why today, also as a country, we need understanding and care, not haughty waywardness.

Doing well at school is well reflected on today's labour market. It is true that the crisis spares no one. But who has better chances to survive the consequences: an accomplished accountant, or someone who left school and rushed to earn easy money on the job that is no longer

necessary today?

I guess you know the answer. I believe that we are able to learn. Still, today's lesson will never be erased, and I am sure that for many, the experience must be unbearably painful.

Those who are in trouble will survive, if we, their fellow citizens, do not lose our dignity and truthfulness. If we do not lose touch with the lessons our mothers taught us.

Dignity is not contained in wealth. Dignity is expressed in the ways we think of each other and how we look each other in the eye. How we care for our families, our loved ones, our neighbours.

We must look upon our country as our family, because – be it family or country – we have no other. With years, we have built up a system that today helps the needy to manage.

It is true that the system should be standing on stronger feet. Yet it helps many to manage without losing their dignity. It is participation, not turning a blind eye, that helps us to find our dignity.

The feeling of keeping together makes a society strong, makes a country strong. Makes it something that we proudly call our home. Our country, our home, still needs a lot of work. But it is ours, built with care, maintained with love.

Mother is the spirit of life in this home.

Mothers bring us, families, together, saying: "... there are no better or harder times, only the moment where we dwell now".

Let us get together and let us understand: what is happening today has happened before. And will happen again. The most important thing we can do is to face the changes in the world as stronger and wiser people.

Our mothers have been to Siberia, and brought us home from Siberia. We have returned from exile, as a people and a culture, we have recovered from baneful oppression.

Compared to all that, our present worries are indeed small, but not less real for that.

Yet let us not forget that the deepest core of our being – our joy of being – can never be darkened by the troubles of the day. If only we remember our joy of being, and remind each other that it is there.

Even today, we must keep together, keep together like a big family, because this is the time to do that. We can make it if we do as our mothers have taught us.

Thank you for that, and I wish you a beautiful Mother's Day amid your children and grandchildren.