

Homily Mother's Day 2018

I had just sat down on Friday morning to work on my sermon for this weekend when I got a phone call from a friend. She and her husband are very active in their parish, real hard workers. The last two months they have both been laid up for a number of serious health issues. The first time she and her husband were back at mass was Thursday morning for the holy day, the Feast of the Ascension. Her priest passed them by as they sat waiting for mass to start and never stopped to ask them how they were doing and never even said "hello." My friend's feelings were hurt. She is tempted to stop volunteering at their church for their many activities.

I told her that there is only one reason to volunteer at her church, only one reason to give of her hard earned money to the church, only one reason to show up for mass and pray with her church community. That one reason is Jesus Christ. Not the priest. Jesus Christ! We are grateful to Jesus Christ. Our focus is on Jesus Christ. We put money in the collection because of Jesus Christ. We worship because of Jesus Christ. We focus on the positive because of Jesus Christ.

Why? We are grateful. CHRIST has blessed us.

Yes, my friend and her husband have had a series of problems the last two months but the fact is that on Thursday morning they were feeling good enough to get dressed and attend worship. Thank Jesus for their recovery. Be grateful. None of my friend's grandchildren have cancer this week. Thank Jesus Christ for their health. Gratitude.

Gratitude to God. We have much to be grateful for. Here we are once again gathered together for worship. Most reference what we do here as the "Mass." The preferred term for what we do here is "Eucharist." It is a Greek word. It means "to give thanks." We are here to thank God. We are grateful. There are a billion things for which we can give thanks to God but this weekend in America most of us are taking a moment to thank God for the gift of our mothers.

Yes, as a disclaimer is due. I know some mothers are not good people. Some mothers don't really care about their children. Why do some people always turn to the negative, the darkness, when there is an invitation to live in the light? Christians by definition live in the light. Today is Mother's Day and we choose to focus on the positive, the gift, the blessings our mother's have been to us.

Someone once said his mother never gave him anything. Well, she gave you free room and board for the most important nine months of your life so, don't tell me she never gave you anything.

Helen Steiner Rice is famous for the greeting cards she writes. She wrote one poem called "What is a Mother?" Here is her poem.

It takes a mother's love
 To make a house a home,
 A place to be remembered,
 No matter where we roam. . .
 It takes a mother's patience
 To bring a child up right,
 And her courage and her cheerfulness
 To make a dark day bright . . .
 It takes a mother's thoughtfulness
 To mend the heart's deep hurts,
 And her skill and her endurance
 To mend little socks and shirts...
 It takes a mother's wisdom
 To recognize our needs
 And to give us reassurance
 By her loving words and deeds. . .
 And that is why in all this world
 There could not be another
 Who could fulfill God's purpose
 As completely as a Mother!

I recall standing in a nursing home by the bed of a very very old woman who had lost pretty much everyone in her family. I asked her who she missed the most.

She did not hesitate even a second. She said: "I miss my mother. There is not a day goes by that I don't think about her. I miss my mother."

How many of us complain about having nothing when the gift of our mother's was really the gift of everything.

I'd like to offer you some thoughts from a mother.

"Reflection of a Mother"

I gave you life, but cannot live it for you.
 I can teach you things, but I cannot make you learn.
 I can give you directions, but I cannot be there to lead you.
 I can allow you freedom, but I cannot account for it.
 I can take you to church, but I cannot make you believe.
 I can teach you right from wrong, but I cannot always decide for you.
 I can buy you beautiful clothes, but I cannot make you beautiful inside.
 I can offer you advice, but I cannot accept it for you.
 I can give you love, but I cannot force it upon you.
 I can teach you to share, but I cannot make you unselfish.
 I can teach you respect, but I cannot force you to show honor.
 I can advise you about friends, but cannot choose them for you.
 I can advise you about sex, but I cannot keep you pure.
 I can tell you the facts of life, but I can't build your reputation.
 I can tell you about drink, but I can't say "no" for you.
 I can warn you about drugs, but I can't prevent you from using them.
 I can tell you about lofty goals, but I can't achieve them for you.
 I can teach you about kindness, but I can't force you to be gracious.
 I can warn you about sins, but I cannot make you moral.
 I can love you as a child, but I cannot place you in God's family.
 I can pray for you, but I cannot make you walk with God.
 I can teach you about Jesus, but I cannot make Jesus your Lord.
 I can tell you how to live, but I cannot give you eternal life.
 I can love you with unconditional love all of my life...and I will!

- Unknown Found on the internet

Once upon a time a mother gave birth to you.
 Today, with Jesus, you are called upon to give birth to yourself.
 What kind of person do you choose to be?
 Of the many choices inside an answer to this question is the choice to live each day in the light. God is Good and His fingerprints are everywhere.
 Today, we thank God for the gift of our mothers.
 Wherever they are we ask the living God to embrace them and love them as we most certainly do.

Amen.

Ask ALL members of the female gender to stand for a Mother's Day Blessing.

Priest: Women give birth to new life in this world through their love, sacrifice, service, kindness and care giving.

Real mothers happen in this world because someone decides to love and care and make sacrifices for someone else.

You who are standing before me were filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of your baptism. Christ claimed you. Christ entered you. Christ filled you.

This Spirit of Christ is the same Spirit who breathed herself on the face of this dead planet and filled it with every form of living creature.

This Spirit of God who lives inside you has come with a purpose and a plan for your life.

God means for you to bring life into this world of darkness through your acts of love.

You were chosen by God at your baptism to go out into the world and love others.

To Love those who are kind to you as well as those who disdain you.

To Love those who build you up and to love those who might tear you down.

To love those who are selfish, unfaithful, and unforgiving.

This does not mean that you should ever submit to abuse or insult from others.

To submit to this would be to dishonor God's creation that you are.

Your life must be God's smile on this fallen world.

Your acts of charity and kindness and self-giving are to be God's seeds planted in human hearts and destined to bring life.

Remember on this Mother's Day who you are.

You are:

Chosen by God as his daughter.

Sent by God to be his living body in the world.

And just as Christ, the Word, created the universe.

So you are commissioned and empowered by the Spirit to create.

And so we pray: (Priest holds hands over congregation.)

"Good and Gracious God, bless these women and young girls with the power of your Holy Spirit. Use them to create life in this dark and cold universe. Empower them with your Holy Spirit. Let the example of their faith and love shine upon us all. And let this world be a better place because they have passed through it.

We ask this blessing in the name and power of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen."