

## PASTOR'S COLUMN

### *Mother's Day and Mary's Month of May*

Although we pray to God as Father (as Jesus taught us), God is the source and fullness of the paternal and the maternal. The Bible images God as mother (as well as father). "As a mother comforts her child, so I [God] will comfort you." (Is. 66:13). "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you! How I long to gather you as a hen gathers chicks under her wings." (Jesus in Mt. 23:37).

One of the ways we experience God's maternal love is through the love and care of our earthly mothers. So, while Mother's Day is a secular holiday (did Hallmark create it?), it points to the maternal love of God at work in our world through mothers.

Personally, I was blessed to have two wonderful earthly mothers. My birth mother, Merle, was a mother of four, a homemaker, scout leader, "Sodality mom" and school volunteer. I remember her as generous, kind and loving. I recall how she took me to 6:30 am weekday mass so I could be an altar server. Momma Merle died an untimely death during childbirth at age 37 when I was only 12, leaving a big void in our family.

Blessedly, as my father was struggling to raise four children, he met a single woman who was close to him in age, Joyce. She was a legal secretary, a Catholic, a daily communicant and a member of her Church's Parish Council. My dad dated Joyce for a time. They married when I was 14. Joyce, who adopted us kids, was a phenomenal mother and servant for our family for 42 years until her death at age 81.

I was fortunate to experience the maternal love of God through two earthly mothers and through their sacrificial, caring way. Neither of them was perfect, but I am clear that their selfless example had a major positive impact on my life and my faith.

I have a third mother and she is my spiritual mom, the Blessed Mother. I have a long-time devotion to Mary which blossomed when I recognized that I was unfulfilled practicing law. As I began praying the rosary daily, Mary led me to her Son, who led me to the priesthood, where I have found my fulfillment and peace.

Each of us has a story to tell about our earthly mother(s) and our relationship with the Blessed Mother. As we celebrate Mother's Day, let's tell the story. Let's remember the good our mothers have done, thank them and forgive their shortcomings. And during the month of May, we honor Mary, the earthly mother of Jesus and our spiritual mother. We give thanks to God for her and seek her prayerful support for our needs.

Happy Mother's Day, and a blessed "Mary" month of May!

God bless,  
Fr. Joe