



Homily for 5/12/2019

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter, Year C

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*Mother's Day*

Jesus is the Good Shepherd who provides for his sheep. His sheep hear him and know his voice. But how does He speak to us today? He speaks to us now through His bride, the Church, who has become our mother in the order of Grace.

Happy Mother's Day!

Of course we will traditionally celebrate the official beginning of the Church starting at Pentecost, but it won't hurt us to baptize a secular remembrance of our mothers in order to thank the Lord also for Mother Church!

Why do we celebrate our mothers?

Can a mother forget the child of her womb? This is the rhetorical question God asks through his prophet Isaiah. He uses the undoubtable love of a mother as an image of his love for his people. Of course we realize that our mothers are imperfect; they have their flaws. They are not perfect. That is not the point. The point is: despite her flaws and our own, she still loves us unconditionally.

That is why we celebrate mothers. No matter what our arguments and difficulties, we still know that our mother has an innate love for us that is as close to us as our own flesh and blood. But it goes deeper than that.

Besides giving us birth, mothers also give us their wisdom. Who doesn't have his mother's voice in his head encouraging us to keep trying, warning us from harm?

They actually did a study of children sleeping through fire alarms. It was noted that when the shrill high-pitched sound of a standard fire alarm went off, only about 50% of the children woke up and left the room. However, when they replaced that tonal alarm with a recording of the mother's voice shouting a message of alarm, that number spiked to 90%! <sup>1</sup>

Thank you, mothers, for keeping us safe and warning us of dangers!

There is another instinct. When we get scared and frightened, we run to mother. I see it all the time at our potluck dinners and other parish gatherings when children are running around. Inevitably one child will fall or scrape his knee or run into a pole. Then, it is amazing at the bee-line he makes straight to his mother. It's biological. It's conditioning. It's trust.

When I was a boy of 11, I recall one event where I had gotten angry about who knows what. 11-year-olds don't always have a rational reason for their anger ... but in my ornery state, I was blustery and ugly towards my mother. Then, all of a sudden, my nose started bleeding. We had been suffering from allergies since our move to Tennessee, and our sinuses were raw. But it is amazing what happened with that nosebleed. As soon as I realized it was bleeding, my anger vanished, replaced by fear - and what did I do? I ran to mother. She knows what to do, and she will take care of me.

This is instinctive, but it is also indicative of a mother's love.

The question I ask you on this Mother's Day is: To whom do you run when you get a proverbial nose-bleed? When the world gives you a bloody nose?



I am not surprised by the phenomenon that when a crisis strikes a community or a society, the churches start to fill up . . . at least for a while.

It is interesting how we call on our mother in difficult times, even if we have ignored her at more prosperous times.

We may at times have a love/hate relationship with our mother the Church - especially in more recent times. But remember this: God knew what he was doing when he espoused himself to her. She is here for you. When you come home she has prepared a banquet for you in the Eucharist. And of course she reminds you to wipe your feet and wash your hands in the Sacrament of Reconciliation before partaking. Mothers rules are always salutary.

The Good Shepherd knows his sheep, and they follow him. "He who hears you hears me," Jesus said to His Apostles. Jesus entrusted his beloved disciple to his mother and his mother to his beloved disciple. "Behold your mother." "Behold your son." Mary is for us the image and model of the Church.

On this Mother's Day, let us honor our biological mothers, our spiritual mothers, Mary the Mother of God and our mother in the order of Grace, and of course our Holy Mother the Church!

Happy Mother's Day!

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2018-10-25/study-mothers-voice-makes-for-more-effective-smoke-alarm>