

## Homily - 6th Sunday of Easter - May 12-13, 2012

Good Morning! Happy Mothers Day to all the mothers, expectant mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, godmothers, and all the women with us today.

Today, we are invited to remember and recognize our mothers whether they are here with us in the pew, live miles away or live in our hearts and our memories. Mothers, more than anyone else, share in the creative work of God.

A group of small children were once asked why God made mothers. Their answers are provocative and entertaining and show that it all depends on one's perspective.

- One little boy was quick to respond when asked why God made mothers?
- Well, she's the only one who knows where the scotch tape is.
  
- Another, when asked what ingredients mothers are made of answered:
- God makes mothers out of clouds and angel hair and everything nice with a smidgen of mean.
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- The next question was: Why did God give you your mother and not some other mom?
- One 6 year old quickly replied: God knew she likes me a lot more than other people's moms like me.
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- The last question was: If you could change one thing about your mom, what would it be?
- And the answer echoed a wish many have had: I would like for my mom to get rid of those invisible eyes in the back of her head.

It is fitting that 2 of today's readings speak about love. Love is the commandment that Jesus gave us: We are to love one another as He has loved us. Where do we learn that except from our mothers? For most people, they learn love from a mom.

All of us experienced love in the beginning by dwelling for nine months listening to the beautiful sound of a heartbeat, the beating heart of our own mother. This sound permeated our life more than any other for the first months of our

existence. This was our first experience with love.

We learn love by being loved. We must learn how to love the people we see and know before we can learn to love God whom we cannot see.

The gospel gives us a strong commandment to love one another. Unfortunately, we live in a world that is lacking in love, a world that is almost a contradiction to love. We see the ramifications of this lack of love in family breakdowns, social problems and in a world that never seems to be at peace. Why do we ignore this basic commandment?

Jesus is very clear in his command to love-- there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for others. Loving others involves sacrifice, acts of mercy and charity, doing things for others.

The late Mother Teresa of Calcutta is a prime example of someone who expressed her love in an active ministry, picking up dying people off the streets of Calcutta and giving them a place where they could die with dignity.

None of us is expected to be a Mother Teresa. God calls each of us to love in our very own way. There is only one Mother Teresa and there is only one me. God only expects me to be who I am and use my gifts, talents, and resources right where he has planted me.

Our society has trivialized love. Perhaps real love is not so much an emotion as it is an action. Mother Teresa saw Christ in the suffering and dying that she picked up off the streets. How do we see and love the Christ in those around us?

Do we get our models for loving from holy people like Mother Teresa or from the movies, TV and Hallmark? Loving is not just a sentimental greeting card message but a call and a challenge.

Marriage Encounter founder Fr. Gabriel Calvo says that love is a decision. Jesus calls us to love, even when the people around us may not be very lovable. Therein lies the challenge.

We must make the decision to love. Everywhere, we are surrounded by those who need our love. Do we take the time to notice and then do we respond? Who do we pick up off the streets of our life and carry with us?

How do we show and express our love for those closest to us? For those who live with us? Do we see Christ in our children, our parents, our spouse? Sometimes, those in our own house are the hardest to love. They may be the very ones who hurt and challenge us the most.

Jesus told us that we should love even our enemies, those who have hurt us. How do we love those who aggravate us? Those who have:

- Wronged us?
- Taken advantage of us?
- Bullied us? Made fun of us?
- Do we forgive them? Do we pray for them?

How do we love those who are in need emotionally, spiritually, physically?

- Do we take the time to listen when a friend, co-worker, or family member needs to talk?
- Do we visit that shut-in down the street who seldom gets out?
- Do we run an errand for an elderly neighbor or a new parent, or someone who is unable?
- Do we ever offer to pray with or for someone who is in need of our prayers?
- Do we offer assistance to those who are just not making it financially? In our own parish, we are invited to contribute to the Black Bag and to the food collection. Is that enough?

How do we love those on the fringes of society?

- Those who might be just a little bit different from us.
- Those who are less fortunate than I am.
- Those with an addiction, the imprisoned, the homeless.
- Those who don't earn an adequate income.
- The unemployed or underemployed.
- The illegal, the immigrant.
- Those who are handicapped in any way.
- Mother Teresa was the ultimate model for this kind of love. because she saw Christ in every one that she encountered. Do we strive to see Christ in all those whom we encounter?

Who will I meet today, tomorrow or this week; who will need my love? Will I notice? Will I be open and available? Will I respond? Will I take time? Will I make the decision to love? That is my challenge -- to bring Christ's love into the

corner of the world where I am planted.

God calls each of us to love one another just as he has loved us.

Oh, and don't forget to call your mother and tell her that you love her!

Deacon Gary Aitchison