

Homily of Fifth Sunday of Easter of Year A (Mother's Day)

Ten quotes about mother:

- There is no role in life that is more essential than that of motherhood. - Elder Russell Ballard
- A mother understands what a child does not say. - Jewish proverb
- A mother is she who can take the place of all others but whose place no one else can take. - Cardinal Mermillod
- The influence of a mother in the lives of her children is beyond calculation. - James Faust
- Moms are like buttons—they hold everything together. - Unknown.
- When you are a mother you are never really alone in your thoughts. A mother always thinks twice, once for herself and once for her child. - Sophia Loren
- Mother is the bank where we deposit all our hurts and worries. - Dewitt Talmage
- Mothers are like glue. Even when you can't see them, they're still holding the family together. - Susan Gale
- Mother is the heartbeat in the home; and without her, there seems to be no heart throb. - Leroy Brownlow
- A mother's love is more beautiful than any fresh flower. - Debasish Mridha

A good mother is the greatest gift. God stopped the work of creation when he made woman. God blessed her with the gift and power of reproduction. God could have used any other means of bringing human beings into the world. He did not. Rather, he designed the means of reproduction through woman. Child bearing is the greatest and highest responsibility. It is so sad in many cultures where women are second class, maltreated and abused.

God demands our respect for mothers as we see in the Scriptures.

- The Lord confirms a mother's authority over her children (Sirach 3:2).
- "They store up riches who respect their mother" (Sirach 3:4).
- "They multiply sin who demean their mother" (Sirach 3:11).
- "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church and handed himself over for her. Husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself" (Ephesians 5:25-28).

In the first reading there was problem of segregation in the early Christian

community in Jerusalem between the Hellenists and Hebrews. The Hellenists were said to be Palestinian Jews who spoke only Greek, while the Hebrews were Palestinian Jews who spoke Hebrew or Aramaic. The same Jewish Palestinian Jews discriminated against each other only on the bases of language, just like we discriminate against each other on account of color and race.

The apostles advised the Christian community to select among themselves people with the following qualities: reputable men, filled with the Holy Spirit, and wisdom. That was the origin of deaconate ministry. It was totally a ministry of service. Almost immediately the ministry expanded to preaching and evangelization. Of special importance are the qualities of leaders recommended by the apostles: reputable men, filled with the Holy Spirit, and wisdom. If those who present themselves or those we present for leadership positions have these qualities, our world will be a better place. A writer in Nigeria wrote that the problem with Nigeria is problem of leadership. This statement is true about Nigeria's situation and is equally true about many countries. If the source of water is poisoned, there is no remedy unless the source of water is cleaned of the poison. We continue our prayers for our rulers and leaders.

We, also, need to learn from the amicable way the apostles resolved the crises in the community. The apostles, without any imposition, urged the community to select those they wanted to be their servants. The selection of the deacons was from both isles (from the Hellenists and the Hebrews) without any report of fighting, manipulation or rigging.

In the Gospel Jesus consoles us: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me." He continues, I am the way and the truth and the life." We bring our troubles to him; he will show the way out. He will bring the truth to light no matter how long it is hidden. He will bring life where life has been stifled by troubles of this world. Psalm 94:18-19 further consoles us, "When I say, 'My foot is slipping,' your mercy, Lord holds me up. When cares increase within me, your comfort gives me joy."

Jesus says, "Whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these..." How can we perform greater works than Jesus? Is this possible? What is Jesus trying to communicate to us? Jesus lived for about 33 years and did his ministry for three years and in Israel only. But today, Christianity has reached every corner of the world. This is "greater work." From the time of the apostles till the present wonders are performed all over the world in the name of Jesus. That is "greater work." We pray that we are part of the greater work. Amen.

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