

Homily of Sixth Sunday of Easter of Year A, 2023 (Mother's Day)

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17; Psalm 66:1-20; 1 Peter 3:15-18; John 14:15-21

Ten quotes on motherhood:

1. There is no role in life that is more essential than that of motherhood. - *Elder Russell Ballard*
2. A mother understands what a child does not say. - *Jewish proverb*
3. A mother is she who can take the place of all others but whose place no one else can take.
- *Cardinal Mermillod*
4. The influence of a mother in the lives of her children is beyond calculation. - *James Faust*
5. Moms are like buttons—they hold everything together. - *Unknown.*
6. 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*
7. Mother is the bank where we deposit all our hurts and worries. - *Dewitt Talmage*
8. Mothers are like glue. Even when you can't see them, they're still holding the family together.
- *Susan Gale*
9. Mother is the heartbeat in the home; and without her, there seems to be no heart throb. - *Leroy Brownlow*
10. A mother's love is more beautiful than any fresh flower. - *Debasish Mridha*

An important question every mother needs to ask herself is whether she fits into the descriptions above. We must, also, acknowledge that there are bad mothers.

Mothers must realize that they have a God-given authority over their family. "The Lord confirms a mother's authority over her children" (Sirach 3:2). But there are mothers who lose this authority to their children's manipulation. There is, also, such a thing as "because I am your mother" authority, whereby a mother owes no further explanation why instructions must be obeyed.

Taking care of our parents is not a choice. It is a commandment from God. There are rewards for those who take care of their parents. The Fourth Commandments says, "Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a long life in the land the Lord your God is giving you" (Genesis 20:12). "They store up riches who respect their mother" (Sirach 3:4). There are curses for those who neglects their mother. "They multiply sin who demean their mother" (Sirach 3:11). "Those who curse father or mother their lamp will go out in the dead of night" (Proverbs 20:20).

For husbands, the Bible says, "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).

During a wedding anniversary, the priest said to the man, the Bible says that you are the head of the family; what is your wife to you? The man thought for a moment and replied, "She is my neck." Husbands, love your wives because they are your necks!

Albert Einstein tells this story: "When we first got married, we made a pact. It was this: In our life together, it was decided I would make all of the big decisions and my wife would make all the little decisions. For fifty years, we have held true to that agreement. I believe that is the reason for the success in our marriage. However, the strange thing is that in fifty years, there hasn't been one big decision." Husbands, love your wives because they make all the little decisions that give success to marriages.

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A good mother is God's greatest gift. God stopped the work of creation when he made the 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 the woman. Child bearing is the greatest and highest responsibility.

In the first reading, Philip proclaimed the word of God in Samaria. "With one accord, the crowds paid attention to what was said by Philip, ... unclean spirits, crying out in a loud voice, came out of many possessed people, and many paralyzed or crippled people were cured. There was great joy in that city." We see that because the people with one accord, paid attention to God's word proclaimed by Philip, demons were driven away, and many sick people were cured. In the same way, if we are of one accord and if we pay attention to God's word, we will have the same experience. Unclean spirits and spiritual paralyses will leave us, and we will be delivered from the sins and afflictions that cripple us. Are we of one accord? Do we pay attention to God's word? Does his word guide us?

It is not so much that Philip was 'a powerful man of God.' It was more the spiritual disposition of the people. Sometimes, this saying is true, "What is received is received according to the manner of the receiver." Unfortunately, our state of disunity, coupled with our lack of attention to God's word render the Holy Spirit inactive in us. That is why St. Peter cautions us in the second reading, "Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts" (1 Peter 3:15).

Today's gospel has some consoling words for us. Jesus says, "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you ... because I live and you will live" (John 14:18-19). Orphans can be unprotected and vulnerable to danger. Jesus assures us that he will not leave us unprotected and vulnerable to danger. Jesus promises, "I will give you an Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of Truth" (John 14:16-17). The Holy Spirit is our spiritual attorney who leads us, guides us, directs us, and intercedes for us. However, we are invited to be of one accord, pay attention to God's word, and sanctify Christ as Lord in our hearts.

Jesus says, "Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him" (John 14:21). May we follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit and so receive divine revelations.

We conclude with the blessed assurance in today's gospel, "Because I live and you will live." The song by Gloria and William Gaither comes to mind:

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow. Because He lives, all fear is gone. Because I know He holds the future, and life is worth a living just because He lives.

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