

HOMILY

Mother's Day

Sunday, May 10, 2009

Rev. Andrew A. Czajkowski
St. John the Evangelist Parish
Davison, Michigan

It is always inspiring as we leaf through the pages of history to see the great influences that mothers have had on their sons and daughters. Even Jesus' mother played a big part in his ministry. As Michelangelo's *Pieta* illustrates with such heart-breaking poignancy, Jesus ended where he began—in the arms of his mother.

Nearly three-quarters of the nation's 103.4 million women aged 15 and older are mothers:

- 23% have one child
- 35% have two;
- 21% have three;
- 21% have four or more.

It is good on this Mother's Day to examine the value of a Christian home, for it is painfully evident in America that there is something missing in our homes. What is missing are not mothers but Godliness. Today, my comments are not only applicable to mothers but to fathers and parenthood in general.

One day, this mother came home and much to her horror discovered that her oldest daughter had given her youngest son a unique haircut. Not only had she cut his hair as short as she could on her youngest brother, she had begun the process of shaving his head.

The mother cried out to her daughter, "What in the world are you trying to do?"

The daughter, realizing the tone of her mother's voice was one of disappointment cried out, "I only wanted him to look like daddy!"

As we celebrate Mother's Day, and parenthood in general, what would our children look like spiritually if they were to look and reflect their mother or father?

A clever preacher once compared the life of a Christian home to a garden. He said that in his garden he would plant three rows of *squash*.

1. *Squash* gossip,
2. *Squash* criticism,
3. *Squash* indifference.

Then he would put in three rows of *lettuce*.

1. *Let us* be faithful.
2. *Let us* be unselfish.
3. *Let us* love one another.

Finally, he would add *turnips*.

1. *Turn up* for church.
2. *Turn up* with a smile.
3. *Turn up* to serve others.

St. John says in today's Second Reading:

“Children, let us love not in word or speech, but in deed and truth.”

That is why the goal for motherhood or fatherhood or striving to have a Christian home is that of Godliness. I believe that simply having children does not make one a mother or a father—only the Holy Spirit can accomplish such an awesome task in our lives. Being a mother, being a father—if that is God's will for your life—is not a position of status but a place of service and surrender to the perfect will of God. I believe, and many women have told me, that motherhood grants a purpose to life far greater than anything the world can provide.

On this day we come waving boxes of candy and bottles of cologne and fragile blossoms. We sit all in one pew and sing and pray and listen. When the service is done, we hurry to stand in line for an hour at a restaurant. Then in a frenzy we marshal the children and the grandchildren together, kiss her goodbye and head home. And in some cases, that's it for another year. May it be more than that. May it be recognition that the hands that rock the cradle are the hands that shape the world.

Parents, never ever underestimate the power and influence you have by the example you set each day of your life. Abraham Lincoln once said, “No child is poor who has a Godly mother.” St. John says, “*Children, let us love not in word or speech, but in deed and truth.*”

Like being a disciple of Jesus, mothering is both a “noun” and a “verb.” A noun is a person, place or thing. A verb is a word or series of words expressing action. Truly blessed are they who have a mother who is not only a noun but a verb.



Blessing of Mothers

Holy God, creator of all life, we give you thanks for our mother, for the life you give to us through her, and for her countless acts of love and service

Bless her work of love, lighten her burdens, renew her strength, and give her joy.

We pray for all mothers. May they have the courage to live holy lives, the faith to persevere in love. May their children be a blessing to them and to the world.

This we ask through Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Mary, who lives forever and ever.

Amen