

It's A Hard Knock Life

Happy Mother's Day to all who celebrate! It is the one thing that we all have in common: everyone has or had a mother, either biological, adopted, step, or someone who filled the role of "mother." While some mothers were wonderful, others were not. For some, this is not a joyous day but painful and full of hurt. We hold you in our prayers today. For others, it is a day to honor our mothers who are still with us and for those who are mothers, to be honored.

Throughout the Sacred Scriptures, parents were to be honored. The commandment, "Honor thy father and mother," was written to remind offspring of their responsibility to care for their parents in their old age. Apparently, seniors were forgotten or ignored, so this commandment was given to ensure their care. It was also important for people to remember to provide for those who were orphaned or, in some cases, abandoned by their parents.

Depending on your Christian denomination, Jesus' own relationship with his mother, Mary, is held on some level of distinction. While tradition tells us that Joseph passed away even before Jesus'

public ministry, we can only gather that Jesus treated his own mother with love and respect. In Southwick, some of us have been watching *The Chosen*. In the episode we saw this past Thursday, it portrayed Mary of Nazareth, Jesus' mother, as visiting Jesus and the disciples during one of the mass healing episodes that we read about in the Gospels. When all had been healed, it showed the human Jesus as exhausted, covered in sweat and blood, and hardly able to walk. I was moved to tears to see Mary go to her son, wash his feet, hands, and face.

We all need someone to help us, take care of us, and be with us. In today's reading from the Acts of the Apostles, Paul tells those gathered, "We are God's offspring." In the reading from the Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples, "I will not leave you orphaned. I am coming to you." When Jesus left the disciples in death, there was a huge void, much like how we feel when we lose someone we love.

But there are times when we, too, feel like orphans. But, as God's offspring, we know that we are not alone; God is with us when we reach out, however it is we envision God. For some of us, God is "Father," while for others, God can be "Mother." Some use these

interchangeably, while others simply see God as Creator, Sovereign, King, Maker of the Stars, etc. These are all perfectly acceptable as we recognize ourselves as offspring.

Jesus tells us that we will not be left orphaned. God sent the Holy Spirit to the disciples to fill them with zeal to proclaim the Good News. All of us will celebrate that in two weeks. Let us use that time to be filled with zeal of our own. We cannot leave one another orphaned; we are called to love God and to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Jesus was very specific about our call to care for our neighbors. In his day, people who tried to live on their own found it very difficult. Those who worked, prayed, and played in community tended to do much better. Look around and see for yourselves, as we are not orphaned. When we gather together to pray, break open the Word, break bread in Communion or any other meal, and support each other, we remind ourselves that the people with us and we are truly NOT orphaned.

Can it appear that it is a “hard knock life for us?” At times, yes! Let us turn to God and let us turn to our spiritual community for support as we call upon the Holy Spirit to make us anew. Amen.