

PASTORAL REFLECTION FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 15, 2022

Last week end with a full church included Mother's Day, and since Father Jack really felt a call, rightfully, to focus his homily on Roe vs. Wade, I felt free to write a little reflection for this week end back on Mother's Day.

I remember asking my mother often which of us she loved the most, and every time she would diplomatically respond, "whoever needs it the most at the time." And she seemed to be very good at sorting that out at any given moment. As I look back on the challenge I was to her efforts to raise me, I wonder that either one of us survived the process, but somehow, both of us did, and God's grace was a powerful element in the mix between us. Without a doubt it was all held together by a generous measure of love on both sides. My mother died in my arms, and I have always believed that forgiving doesn't stop when someone dies. It continues to be given and to heal until we are reunited and all the struggles fall away into blessing. I hope the afterlife allows me some way to tell her how grateful I am for all the sacrifices she made for me, and I have begun to tell her that now.

Around Mothers' Day, I like to reflect on the many women who have been a significant influence in my life, the many "mothers" who helped raise me through one phase of it or another. There was the seventh grade science teacher whose sensitive comment at just the right moment changed my entire academic perspective and opened up the wonders of creation to me. There was the freshman speech teacher who inspired me with a love of speech and debate competition (I dare say no one is surprised about this!) that resulted in a four year college scholarship. There was the college professor who took me into her seminar and opened the world of reading and literature. There was the directress who helped God form an Ursuline sister from the clay of a college graduate who had never seen the inside of a Catholic school and had very little experience of Church. I didn't know my grandmothers, but I had some wonderful mentors who took their place for me over time, some of them among the members of my religious community on whose shoulders I now stand.

In today's readings we find the mandate to love as Jesus loves, and this may be a good day to think about those amazing women who have let us experience the way Jesus loves in our own lives, beginning with our moms and continuing through a significant list of gifted women God has provided for each of us. Who are these women in your life?

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