

Mother's Day – Honoring Our Mothers

The practice of celebrating Mother's Day comes from Civil War times. Mrs. Ann Reeves Jarvis wanted to organize a special day for mothers who had sons fighting on opposing sides in the Civil War. Ann Jarvis was a peace activist who cared for wounded soldiers on both sides of the American Civil War, and created Mother's Day Work Clubs to address public health issues. Jarvis's daughter, Anna, wanted to honor her mother by continuing the work she started and, in 1907, began a movement to make Mother's Day a national event. Anna wanted to set aside a day to honor all mothers because she believed a mother is "the person who has done more for you than anyone in the world." Finally, in 1914, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the second Sunday of May as Mother's Day.

Mothers teach love. And they teach it by doing loving things for their children and for other people. Mothers, like Jesus, become the measurement of how we are to love. Jesus said, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." (John 13:34) So every mother silently says the same. Watch me and you will learn how to love. Let me move you from self-centeredness to sharing and concern for others. Watch me and I will show you how to do it. This way, every mother furthers the good news of Christ.

Out of French Revolution came the story of a mother who had wandered through the woods for three days with her two children, trying to survive on roots and leaves. On the third day, she heard some soldiers approaching and quickly hid herself and the children behind some bushes. The sergeant in charge prodded the bushes to see what was stirring behind them. When he saw the starving woman and children he immediately gave them a loaf of bread. The mother took it eagerly, broke it into two pieces, and gave one piece to each of the children. "She has kept none for herself," the sergeant said. "Because she is not hungry?" a soldier asked. "Because she is a mother," the sergeant replied.

Love is taught by loving actions. Our first experience of love in this life comes from our mothers. We recognize that instinctively. We need to acknowledge also that the love of God is taught by lots of "moms" and "dads" – even the ones that are childless or single. And so Mother's Day and Father's Day really celebrate all those people who have mothered and fathered us, and taught us how to love.

"Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." (John 13:34) This is the perfect verse and message for Mother's Day. Why? Because love is what mothers do best.

Happy Mother's Day!
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District Chaplain

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