

The Third Sunday of Easter

May, 8, 2011

Luke 24: 13-35

Preached at St. Luke's Church

Mother's Day

By

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In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, AMEN!

I would like too warmly welcome all the mother's that are with us this morning and wish you a Happy Mother's Day.

{ 10 AM ONLY: In a special way, I would like to welcome Kristy and Vin McAteer whose one year old son, Harrison Isaac McAteer, will be baptized this morning by his Great Uncle Bishop Michael Vono from the Diocese of Rio Grande.}

In this morning's Gospel according to Luke, the evangelist vividly describes the apostles on the road to Emmaus. They lost sight of Jesus to the point where they could not recognize him

**as he walked and talked with them. On Easter Sunday
afternoon they walked out of Jerusalem broken hearted united
in their despair and sadness. What I love about this Gospel
story is that it is Jesus who comes to them in their great
sadness. Jesus seeks them out and walks with them in their
pain. That has always fascinated me - this scene between two
beloved disciples of our Lord, filled with sadness and despair,
grieving the death of their friend, telling a stranger how their
hopes for the future were gone.**

**And our risen Savior himself, unknown to them patiently
listens to them. As he heard those words of grief and sadness,
no doubt Jesus heart must have been touched by their pain.**

**Can't you just feel their disappointment? They said," But we
had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel." They might
as well have said, "We used to hope, but not anymore."**

**Because that's just the way they felt. As far as they were
concerned, Jesus was dead and gone. He had died a cruel death
on the cross and now, the hopes and dreams were gone forever.**

The story of those two disciples on the Road to Emmaus is the story of faith reborn. It is the story of resurrected hope fully restored. That's what makes this Gospel story so lovely. That's what makes it one of the greatest stories ever told. Today's Gospel reminds us that we have received a promise from our God, as well, as a word of hope when our lives spiral into despair. God's beloved Son will come to us unexpectedly and quietly when we are most down and out. When we feel all hope is lost He comes to us and patiently listens. Jesus comes to us with God's promise to establish a deeply personal relationship with us, and to be with us, not just by our side, but within us as a mother, father, friend and companion. Jesus is not there in our hearts, minds and souls, neither hearing nor speaking, but as an active partner in our lives, guiding and comforting us when we need Him as we walk down our own road to Emmaus. This relationship is the very heart of our Christian spirituality. Our relationship with God is a unique and custom designed journey fashioned after the uniqueness of each individual

person. Once we begin walking down that road with our God, we will never have to be alone on this journey through life. But, Love demands expression in a relationship. What is most important in our relationship with Jesus is that like the disciples we stand at the threshold to the door of our hearts with the power to recognize him and invite him into our lives. By God's son giving up his life on a cross for us; he defines true love as a self-less act. We recognize Jesus in that self-less act of love this morning as the bread is broken at our Eucharistic table and the wine is poured out for us once again in remembrance of Him. Sacramentally, we remember and we recognize the real presence of Jesus amongst us; His body is broken and His blood is poured out because He loves us. This very unique relationship with our God is not simply an attitude adjustment nor is it some kind of sappy emotion. This courageous love is truly more of a mother's kind of love filled with the dearest hopes and dreams for all her children. So

today we remember and we celebrate our mother's love, hopes, dreams and her joys.

The Origin of Mother's Day in America is not rooted in Hallmark Cards, FTD Flowers, Russell Stover's Chocolates or the Sunday, Mother's Day brunch.

Mother's Day did not come from Mother's insisting they needed a 'day off,' nor did it come from President Wilson's declaration that the second Sunday in the month of May be declared "Mother's Day."

So much of this Mother's Day hoopla waters down and undermines Mother's Day. It seems to suggest that every mom is the same. That every mom has the same tastes and needs and that all you really need is a good Sunday brunch to make you happy. The flowers, the cards, the chocolates, the gifts, the brunches all work together to create a dreamy perfect view of motherhood.

I feel confident that most women sitting in this church this morning would agree that motherhood is rarely dreamy or

perfect. Motherhood is a complicated joy because we all live in a complicated and broken world.

There are those moms who have been beaten, abused and abandoned who find precious little to rejoice in this morning.

There are those ‘mother’s in waiting’ women who wanted and prayed to be mothers without success and wake this morning with deep wounds.

There are moms here this morning whose hearts are broken by the loss of their mothers. They long to hear their mother’s voice, touch her hand and feel her love just once again.

There is the unwed teenage expectant mom scared and vulnerable, and yet her love makes her fierce enough and courageous enough to be strong and determined for her unborn child.

There is the heartache of the mother of a special needs child, like my Linda, whose hopes and dreams have been shattered by the reality that her child’s life and her motherhood will never be the dream she anticipated, planned or hoped for.

There are mothers who've had abortions, miscarriages, or stillborn babies who awake this morning and think of their children.

There are many mothers who've had to bury their children due to sickness, injury, crime and war. There are SIDS mothers who have no answers and turn their eyes to Heaven this morning begging God for answers as to why they had to bury their very young children.

There are birth mothers who had to make the incredibly difficult decision to love so much that they released their child to someone else's care, so their child could have a better life than they could possibly give them. Can we even begin to imagine the pain these mothers must feel this morning?

Yes, Mother's Day is a complicated joy.

So, if you are a mom and you feel as though you don't fit into the ideal model of the Mother's Day hoopla then all the cards, chocolates, flowers, brunches and Mother's Day sermons end up being a reminder of how 'you are not like all the other

moms in this dreamy Hallmark view. Why? Because your experience of motherhood is complex, individual and as unique as you are. Motherhood is far too profound to fit on a Hallmark card because you and your motherhood is all about a lifetime of relationships and not about a Hallmark moment. Relationships are complicated and Mother's Day is a complicated joy.

Allow me to take you to the place where Mother's Day was truly founded. Let me take you to a wind swept open field filled with white stone markers. Let me take you to a military Funeral an event that goes on and on everyday throughout this country. Let me bring you graveside to see a flag draped coffin of another soldier killed in the line of duty. Smell the powder as the salute is fired. Hear the taps play. Watch the flag meticulously folded by the honor guard and passed into the white gloved hands of the senior officer leading the cortege. The officer marches slowly towards a woman doubled over in grief. Feel her pain as he bends over to hand her the flag. She

looks up into his face and he says, “This flag is presented on behalf of the President of the United States and a grateful nation as a token of appreciation for your loved ones honorable and faithful service.”

Mother’s have sat, and continue to sit, in windswept fields of white stone markers next to the flag draped coffins of their sons, daughters and husbands since the Revolutionary War, since the War of 1812, since the Civil War, since the Spanish American War, since World War I, since World War II, since the Korean War, since the Viet Nam War, since the War in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as, the countless numbers of bloody skirmishes over the course of this country’s very, very short history. Mother’s have sat next to the coffins of their beloved children and wept.

The origin of Mother’s Day is here in the grave yard. It is deeply rooted in mothers, everyone of them strong women, whose children died in war and who came together to build the Kingdom of God and work for compassion, justice,

reconciliation, healing and finally, finally, peace. They stood up to the President of the United States and said, “Enough!”

“Enough!” Mothers are sick to death of war. Mothers are sick to death of seeing their acts of self-less love, their faith, their devotion, their compassion, and their virtues which they had spent the best parts of their lives teaching their children only to be unlearned and squandered on a battle field. They never raised their child to be killed or to kill another child of another mother in another country. They raised their children to love. Both of those mothers weep beside their children’s graves.

My dear friends in Christ, that is the origin of Mother’s Day. If we look at mothering as a verb, haven’t we all, both women and men, haven’t we all mothered and loved in some relationship and in some capacity during our lifetimes.

Mothering is truly an inclusive experience.

On Mother’s Day we not only honor mothers, we honor

God's love for us and our relationships with one another, inclusively; no matter how these relationships have developed and turned out over the years.

This morning we honor and pray especially for all mothers and their children who are not with them today.

Mother's Day may very well be a complicated joy, but we pray to our loving and ever present God to break open our hearts so we may recognize His Son's great love for us in the breaking of the bread. AMEN!