

Sixth Sunday of Easter, 2015  
May 9 & 10, 2015

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### Mother's Day

Today we honor our mothers... mothers across the world who have given life, nurtured that life. Think for a moment about your mother or someone who nurtured you. Today we say a prayer of thanks.

As I was hanging up clothes on the clothes line yesterday, I thought about my own mother who loved to hang out the family's clothes out on the clothes lines. She wanted the sun to bleach the whites and the fresh aroma of the outdoors to permeate the bed linens and other clothes. This continued throughout the winter during which she would freeze her fingers hanging the wet clothes with no gloves on. Then she would bring them in and stack them on the dining room table until they thawed. Talk about sacrifice!

Each one of us can think of several examples of how someone loved us enough to make great sacrifices for us. "No greater love is there than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." That's the kind of love that Jesus speaks of in the Gospel today. "Live on in my love," says Jesus. Which means, live by my words. "I want your joy to be complete," says Jesus, and the way to that joy is love.

A mother who was dying called her children to her bedside, they were young adults. To the eldest son, she gave a bundle of sticks that were tied together. She told him to break the bundle in half. He couldn't. She then took out a stick and said, break that and as expected, it snapped in half. "Love one another," she told the, stay together.

We are all members of the same family but we don't always know what staying together means, though we have heard the words: bear one another's burdens; give food and drink to those in need; shelter, visit, clothe, console, encourage.

A friend of mine, Blair, recently went for a job interview. She painstakingly wrote her resume, had it check by a professional, went on the company's website to learn everything about the company, and practiced responses to possible questions. Finally, the day came for the interview. She tried not to show her

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anxiety but as she was leaving, she tripped and while lying on the carpet she turned and said: "Please choose me anyway." We don't have to perform for God. Jesus is emphatic: "It was not you who chose me; it was I who chose you." And why did God choose you? "To go and bear fruit that will last."

Our fruit is that which comes from our loving. We must will to love, even the least among us and those we find difficult to love.

In your bulletin there is a flier which directs us on how to do something for the least, something for our little brothers and sisters, something that will bear fruit that will last if enough of us do it. You are being asked to write a letter on behalf of children in our nation who are under nourished. Children who are living in poverty, on the edges. Did you know that studies historically have shown that when a baby is undernourished in its first thousand days there is an irreversible negative effect on that child's development? Recent studies reveal that those first thousand days extends to middle school. The joint budget resolution for the 2016 fiscal year includes deep cuts to anti-hunger programs. The House and Senate are close to finalizing a deal for the overall parameters of the 2016 budget. Ensuring Congress reauthorized the child nutrition bill. Lawmakers, John Katko, will hold in their hands the lives and future well-being of children across the country who depend on the nutritious food they get from services like school meal programs and the Women, Infants and Children Programs.

If someone you love is threatened would you not do something to protect that loved one? These little ones and their mothers need out voice. Let us join with churches throughout the US who will do an offering of letters on this Mother's Day. Let us not allow one stick of the bundle to be broken. Let us bear fruit for the sake of those who Jesus asks us to love.