

Living the Spirit Mother's Day

This Sunday has many themes for its celebration. In our country it is both the Seventh Sunday of Easter and a celebration of the Ascension of the Lord. This shows that even the Church cannot escape from being in a time of division. In our Diocese we celebrate the Ascension on its actual feast day. I must let it to your attendance at Mass to discover the riches of our liturgical teaching about the Ascension. It must be enough here to say that it is a clear indication of the Lord's victory and His return to the glory He has as God and as incarnate Man.

In our civil or secular calendar today is Mother's Day. I have to admit that in my life experience that day was always a very important day. As often happens when one gets old, one's memories dwell a bit on the past. I readily admit that such a day will bring to mind just how blessed I was to have the mother I had. I hope you can say the same. The fact is that most of us do not always appreciate that simple fact. Even now I probably will not be thinking of my mother as the hard-working woman she was. I have grown to idealize my memory of her.

Like so many mothers, my mother was certainly a woman of faith. It was faith she shared with me as a child in many ordinary ways. I have a vague recollection of being taken by her to church, that mysterious place where God dwells. I am sure I was prepared to be quiet, and not disturb the congregation. I cannot recall many other signs of religious practice in those early years. [I always think of home as the domain of the mother.] I do know that they were there, seeping into my very being by a kind of spiritual osmosis. The home had its crucifix. There was always a blessed candle around in case of storms. If I could not go to sleep I was told to speak to Mary by the rosary, and a good night's rest was assured.

I have other recollections, and I share them with you. After the Christmas dinner my mother would take her leave and go out with packages, one of which was a part of the dinner. She would say that the dishes could be left to clean up later. I often think how she knew that being compulsive I would take care of them – and then be somewhat proud of my good deed. Faith in action was then apparent, but only as what was to be expected and deserved no reward.

I think too of how many other nice things of life are learned from mothers. The use of the magic words of "please" and "thank you." The idea of how and when to dress just right for the occasion. Even the fact that once in while a boy (a man) needs a haircut. So many lessons that make life comfortable to one and all.

Now I have written about my own experience, because I want you to think about your own. There may be many differences, but there is one common factor. It is simply defined as a mother's love. That love for the child is unique and cannot be limited by mere words. Perhaps like me, after all these years of separation, you can still feel the warmth of that love. It is a memory like no other. I happen to think it is one wrapped in the grace and blessing of a loving God.

A Time of Division, A Time of Confusion

I just mentioned that I see this age as an age of division. Like you, I cannot turn on the TV without recognizing how divided our world is. Countries are at silent wars with one another, and yes, even openly as such. Our beloved nation seems to be mired in political inabilities. Compromise is a vanishing word and action. Confusion seems to be everywhere. Rights are glorified without any thought of responsibilities. Life is made a personal choice, as if it really were.

This division does not leave untouched our religious practice and understanding. One has only to think of the reaction to what the Holy Father says or writes. We must find in his teaching the meaning of our faith and learn that at its core is nothing other than love. God is love. And God has made us to His image. All the rest matters little in the end.

The Church, Our Mother

I want also to note that we use the term Mother when we speak of the Church. Perhaps today we should celebrate the Church. It is in that community or gathering (*ecclesia* means *gathering*) that we can see how blessed we are. Baptism makes us members of the Church. We become the children of God, and of the Church as Mother. I like to recall how in those happy days when I had the children's Mass the little ones always knew about Baptism, and really believed—as they should—that they are children of God.

Jesus' Mother, Our Mother

We also cannot forget that Catholics have another Mother in Mary, the Mother of Jesus. She is His parting gift to us. Every Catholic should learn and remember well that she is all God wants her to be for us. Read – or rather, pray – the Litany of Mary, and learn how she is just that for us all. Do not be afraid to make your devotion be public. By doing so you will attract others who search the world for her motherly love. And never let yourself feel that you are a motherless child. You simply are not!

As you know I have been writing these inserts for many years now. Their number has grown, and some have been remembered and some forgotten. I have found that I am coming to the end of this small ministry of mine in many ways. I see how many good books are being written about themes I might review. I feel my own creativity is beginning to wane. I shall likely look to the archive of my previous efforts more often than write about the special themes that fit a current day.

Well, this has been a very personal writing, more than a formal instruction in the faith. What thoughts it inspires in you I cannot know. But I hope the Holy Spirit will be at work with you, as I pray He has been with me. Let us truly live the Spirit!

God love and bless you always!
Monsignor Morrison

Why not make a special effort to pray for (or to?) your mother as a gift that lasts? If she is still with you, prayer goes well with flowers.