

Living the Spirit Mothers

Some time ago I was asked how I write these inserts for our parish bulletin. It was not the first time I was asked this question in its various forms. How long does it take you? Where do you get ideas? Why didn't you write one this past week? Let me answer these questions. I write these inserts generally composing as I use my computer as a word processor. I admit that my trigger fingers do make it somewhat hard, but the computer does do spell-check. The time varies, but I can finish it often within a few hours of continued work at it. My ideas? Well, they can come from anywhere.

I try always to begin by praying to the Holy Spirit. After all He is the giver of gifts of knowledge, wisdom and understanding. This brings about a kind of hopeful inspiration. My hope is that somehow the Lord with His Spirit will make my words useful to others for their good. Now let me begin this somewhat challenging theme, which seems to have been invading my mind and peace for some days now.

Mother

What does this word mean to us? How many times in our lives do we find that we have used that word to describe someone? Who were those women? Of course, the first person I knew as mother, was my mother. Later I would have used that dear term about my spiritual mother, Mary, the Mother of Jesus, the wife of Joseph, the One full of grace. How early in my now long life I learned to speak to her in the Hail Mary, thanks to my first mother and the good Sisters who taught me.

Attending Catholic schools, I also learned certain teachers (principals) were to be given that name – Mother Patrona, Mother Divina, Mother Antonella. I recall Mother Anna Dengel (foundress of the Medical Mission Sisters), and who does not know there was a Mother Angelica to be found on TV.

As if these singular persons were not enough, I remind you that we Catholics often refer to the Church as our Mother. This is because it is from the Church we derive so many gifts for the spiritual life we receive through Word and Sacraments.

What do all mothers share? They are those that begin our existence or work to help us grow and live. Without a mother we would not exist. Thoughts from this simple fact are many. Mothers are the first real gift of God to us. They are also the first to give us love. One has only to think how much love been given to us even before we were born. [Please, I do not exclude fathers, but they are certainly not able to do for us all that mothers have done.]

Mother's Day

Every second Sunday of May our country takes time to celebrate [more or less] Mother's Day. Some call the day a Hallmark creation. However, it was not so. There was a need for people to stop and honor all the valiant and good women who bear the name of mother. Society needed a reminder, and somehow the nation established this day on our calendar.

What does this day mean to you? I cannot speak for each of you. I can tell you what I think it should mean, must mean for me. My mother died many years ago – 1969 seems an age. Yet there is something about the relationship I had with my mother that I can feel her present to me in a real way. It is memory that brings this about for me. How I wish your memories will work the same “miracle” for each of you.

If I ask myself on any day what would my mother say or do, memory can quickly bring to the fore the kind of practical wisdom mothers always seem to have. As you may know there is never a day in my life when I do not see a priest, even many of them. Then I recall how my mother wrote to me when I was in Rome: “I saw a priest today when I was going to work; it made my day!” She probably wanted to remind me that I was not the only priest. Or maybe she just wanted to remind me that I should get more joy from being with those with whom I live each day. Why not think what persons your mother would want you to find worthy of your attention today. If you think today of the love life sent your way, I bet one of those persons who gave love to you is bound to be your own mother.

This day I will actually see the picture of my mother that is on the wall of my bedroom. Naturally I will be grateful that a picture can't wake me up in the middle of the night to pick up the covers I manage to kick to the floor. But if that could happen, what a joy I would have. We never quite forget our mother. What acts of your mother will you remember today to help you feel the special love behind them?

Today as one who loves my spiritual mother. I will think of Mary. I will especially ask her to help me be what I have been called to be. May I be able to say: “Be it done to me, Lord, Thy will be done.” Mary is a model for our lives. If you are suffering some pain, ask her to give you some of the courage you need to be like her as she stood at the Cross of her Son. If you don't say the Hail Mary very often, may I ask you, why not? Give her honor today from your heart, for she is your Mother, and it is Mother's Day.

Then today we may hear something about our mother, the Church. Of course, Pentecost is a better day to think about that. So many forget how the Church is really a great good for them. Even her children called to be close to her by faith, may find themselves confused by all the evils that the Church must endure in every age, even our own. I try to love the Church. Love is the best response to give to the Church. Love will let you know how to live in relationship to others in the community of God's People.

Years ago as a teacher of religion I would tell my students as this day was coming to give their mother a special gift, to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, to pray for their mothers and ask God to bless them. At Mass on Mother's Day I will receive Jesus and ask Him to bless my mother and yours. And I will ask Mary to say to her beloved Son, “Do what he asks of you.” On any day how could Jesus not listen to her?

God love you always!
Monsignor Morrison