



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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**May 12/13, Sixth Sunday of Easter
Mother's Day**

Readings, Suggested Homily Notes, and Prayers of the Faithful

Reading 1

Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48

When Peter entered, Cornelius met him
and, falling at his feet, paid him homage.
Peter, however, raised him up, saying,
"Get up. I myself am also a human being."

Then Peter proceeded to speak and said,
"In truth, I see that God shows no partiality.
Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly
is acceptable to him."

While Peter was still speaking these things,
the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the word.
The circumcised believers who had accompanied Peter
were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit
should have been poured out on the Gentiles also,
for they could hear them speaking in tongues and glorifying God.
Then Peter responded,
"Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people,
who have received the Holy Spirit even as we have?"
He ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4

R. (cf. 2b) The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.

or:

R. Alleluia.

Sing to the LORD a new song,
for he has done wondrous deeds;
His right hand has won victory for him,
his holy arm.

R. The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.
or:
R. Alleluia.

The LORD has made his salvation known:
in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice.
He has remembered his kindness and his faithfulness
toward the house of Israel.

R. The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.
or:
R. Alleluia.

All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation by our God.
Sing joyfully to the LORD, all you lands;
break into song; sing praise.

R. The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.
or:
R. Alleluia.

Reading 2

1 Jn 4:7-10

Beloved, let us love one another,
because love is of God;
everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God.
Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love.
In this way the love of God was revealed to us:
God sent his only Son into the world
so that we might have life through him.
In this is love:
not that we have loved God, but that he loved us
and sent his Son as expiation for our sins.

Gospel

Jn 15:9-17

Jesus said to his disciples:
"As the Father loves me, so I also love you.
Remain in my love.
If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love,
just as I have kept my Father's commandments
and remain in his love."

"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you
and your joy might be complete.
This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.

No one has greater love than this,
to lay down one's life for one's friends.
You are my friends if you do what I command you.
I no longer call you slaves,
because a slave does not know what his master is doing.

I have called you friends,
because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father.
It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you
and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain,
so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you.
This I command you: love one another."

Suggested Homily Notes

The First Reading

Our First Reading focuses on Peter and his followers visiting a gathering of the unbaptized, who are eager to hear the word of God.

We hear that the Holy Spirit "fell upon all who were listening to the Word."

This tells us two things:

That God will bless even the smallest act of listening to Him.

That God came for all people... he "shows no partiality."

All we have to do is listen to God, and he will shower us with the Holy Spirit.

The Gentiles in the story didn't ask for blessings or merit them in any way.

The Spirit fell upon "all" who were present and listening.

God sends his Spirit to fortify us in our faith and encourage our acts of love.

The Second Reading

In our second reading, St. John reminds us that:

"Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God."

God loves each of us.

Love itself comes from God.

As Catholics, we are called to love others and tend to their spiritual and physical needs.

God the Father sent the Son into our world with a mission.

We are called to imitate Christ and to love one another in the Christian witness of our daily lives.

Gospel Reading

In today's Gospel, Jesus gives us the model of love.

We must love one another as Jesus loves us.

Our role as individual Catholics is to give generously to others, pouring out our talents, experience and loving acts without hesitation.

He challenges us to remain in his love with these words: "If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love..."

Mother's Day Reflections

Our readings today speak to us of God's command to love.

We are called to:

Listen to God.

Care for the needs of others.

Lay down our lives for the good of another.

This is, in a unique way, the very vocation of motherhood:

Listening.

Caring for the needs of others.

Laying down one's life for another.

A mother's love is first seen even before a woman becomes a mother. A husband and wife's mutual desire to conceive a child in itself demonstrates their fatherly and motherly love. And their love for one another extends to the child they lovingly desire to conceive.

Not much is stronger than a mother's love for her child.

Our mothers, together with our fathers, are the ones who first teach us about love and how to respond to those in need.

The Church, in many ways, is also a mother to us.

She teaches us how to love and to respond to those in need.

From her we receive the grace of the sacraments, are taught to hear the word of God, and receive teaching to guide our steps in the truth and freedom of the children of God.

Today, in a special way, let us be grateful for:

Our mothers, by birth or adoption, who nurtured us and supported us through life.

Our Church who takes on the maternal role of guiding us through life.

And our Blessed Mother, who protects both the Church and all her children.

Religious Liberty and Conscience Rights Reflections

Today, there seem to be government efforts to limit the Church's capacity to be mother to all.

Some want us to stay out of society and not engage the culture.

Some feel our teachings should be kept within the walls of the church.

Some tell us that we have no right to hire or help others outside our faith unless we are willing to compromise our beliefs and teachings.

No matter what policy makers or government officials may try to enforce, the Church can never compromise in its missions to:

Listen to and proclaim the teachings of Christ.

Care for all those in need.

And lay down its life for others.

Blessings

Mother's Day is a fitting day to ask God's special blessing on all mothers (see the *Book of Blessings* for options).

If expectant mothers are present, Mother's Day is also an appropriate time to make use of the newly approved *Rite for the Blessing of a Child in the Womb* which offers blessings for the mother and her child in the womb (see www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/prayers/pro-life-blessings.cfm)

Various Suggested Prayers of the Faithful (Choose as many as appropriate)

For all mothers:

That they be supported and encouraged in their special vocation of love for others;
We pray to the Lord.

For the gift of motherhood:

that all might treasure and support God's plan for life and love;
We pray to the Lord.

For all mothers:

that their children will honor their many sacrifices by lives of service and virtue;
We pray to the Lord.

For all mothers who await the birth of a child, especially those present here today:

that the Lord protect all unborn sons and daughters and bring them to a safe delivery;
We pray to the Lord.

For all married couples who are struggling with infertility:

that the Lord grant them peace as they hope for the gift of a child;
We pray to the Lord.

For mothers who grieve and mourn, especially those who have lost a child before birth:

that they find consolation in God's promise of life;
We pray to the Lord.

For all families:

That the freedom of all people to live out God's plan for life and love be protected and supported in law;
We pray to the Lord.

For those called to work in the health care profession:

that they be granted wisdom to view a woman's fertility as healthy and natural;
We pray to the Lord.

For those called to lives of service:

may they be free to follow their faith in caring for the physical and spiritual needs of others;
We pray to the Lord.

For our lawmakers:
that they be granted the wisdom and courage to uphold conscience rights and protect all people
from being forced to violate their moral and religious convictions;
We pray to the Lord.

For policy makers:
that they be encouraged to support programs that protect a woman's healthy and natural capacity
to be a mother;
We pray to the Lord.

For all churches, agencies, employers, healthcare providers and individuals:
that they may be free from government mandates that would compel them to compromise their
beliefs;
We pray to the Lord.