

## *Mother's Day 2015* *A Perfect Example of Love*

Today we celebrate one of the most important days of the year—Mother's Day! Although this is not a liturgical feast, it is a day that is intimately related to what we believe as Christians; for it is a day in which we celebrate the way in which so many women exemplify the Christian message of love in their lives through their selfless service to their families.

The “vocation” of motherhood—and indeed that is what it truly is—is a “call” to imitate in a concrete way the love that God has for each one of us. Consider for a moment the many ways in which mothers do this every day. First, they place the care of their children and family above their own needs. Many a mother has sacrificed or delayed a career for the good of her children. And all mothers, whether they work at home or in the marketplace understand that the needs of their children come first. Second, the very nature of motherhood requires a woman to provide her children with tender and caring love, love that is unconditional, has no boundaries, love that always finds new and deeper resources.

In today's second reading St. John describes the nature of love and those who practice it. He writes that we ought to love one another because love comes from God. Accordingly, those who love others show that they are children of God. He goes on to say that if we do not exemplify love in our lives, then we do not know who God is since *God is love*. Although this reading was not chosen in view of Mother's Day, what it says about love helps us to understand the profound vocation of motherhood. For, by the unselfish love that mothers show their children and family they reflect God's own love for us. Their love leads us to God's love.

In today's Gospel Jesus also speaks about love. He tells us that his first and most important commandment is that we should love each other as he has loved us. Just as he laid down his life for us, so we should be ready to lay down our lives in love for each other. This is the kind of love that mothers manifest every day. By their unselfish love for family and children, they model the love Christ has shown us. Mothers sacrifice their lives every day, in countless ways, for their family and children. In doing so, they show the love of Christ who is the manifestation of God's own love.

Because motherhood is a “vocation,” a calling from God, it is a way that leads to sanctity and holiness. Mothers attain the goal of the Christian life by the love they show their family and children. They become “saints” by living their vocation to be loving and nurturing mothers. Their way to holiness is found in the ordinary circumstances of life, doing those simple tasks that we too often take for granted.

On this mother's day, I congratulate the mothers of our parish because they have shown us the love God through their unselfish love for their families. I also acknowledge those women who do not have children of their own but who have been a mother to countless others in so many other ways: teaching, mentoring, and caring for children who are not their own. They too are mothers, and this day belongs to them as well. It is with a profound sense of gratitude that all of us give thanks for the gift of our own mothers, be they living or deceased. For it is from them that we first learned of God's love for us.

*Father Matera*