

The 6th Sunday after Easter: Holy Trinity Church: May 9, 2021

Mother's Day: John 15: 9-17: *Mother's Day is a Complicated Joy*

Preached

By

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In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

I want to warmly welcome all the mother's that are with us this today.

In a special way we remember all our mothers that have gone home to

Heaven. I wish you a very Happy Mother's Day. In John's Gospel,

Jesus makes one of the very few, but the most important commandment of the scriptures, and it is most appropriate for Mother's Day.

Jesus describes His relationship with God His Father and His relationship with us when he says. "*As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.*" Then Jesus says, "*This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.*" Jesus is saying that God His Father and our Father is part of our lives.

You see my sisters and brothers in Christ, God yearns for a relationship with us, just as our spirit, our soul yearns and hungers for a relationship with God. Jesus brings to us God's commandment for us to love one

another, as deeply as God loves each of us. This relationship is the very heart of our Christian spirituality. This relationship with God and one another is a unique and custom designed journey fashioned after the uniqueness of each individual person. Once we begin, we will never have to be alone on this journey.

But, Love demands expression in a relationship. What is most important in our relationship with God and with one another is that we are connected in love. This kind of love is not an attitude nor is its sappy emotion found in a day time soap opera. This love involves a concrete decision followed by real action on our part. This personal brand of selflessness that Jesus Christ exemplifies is what it means to truly love another. This personal brand of selflessness exemplifies what it truly means to be a mother.

The Origin of Mother's Day in America is not rooted in Hallmark Cards, FTD Flowers, Russell Stover's Chocolates or the Sunday, Mother's Day brunch. Mother's Day did not come from Mother's insisting they needed a 'day off,' nor did it come from President Wilson's 1914 declaration that the second Sunday in the month of May be declared "Mother's Day."

So much of this Mother's Day hoopla waters down and undermines Mother's Day. It seems to suggest that every mom is the same. That every mom has the same tastes and needs and that all you really need is a good Sunday brunch to make you happy. The flowers, the cards, the chocolates, the gifts, the brunches all work together to create a dreamy perfect view of motherhood. I feel quite confident in saying that most of the women sitting in this church today would agree that motherhood is rarely dreamy or perfect. Motherhood is a complicated joy because we all live in a complicated and broken world.

There are those moms who have been beaten, abused and abandoned who find precious little to rejoice in this Mother's Day weekend. There are those 'mother's in waiting;' those women who have wanted and prayed to be mothers without success and wake this Mother's Day morning with deep wounds.

There are moms here this morning whose hearts are broken by the loss of their mothers. They long to hear their mother's voice, touch her hand and feel her love once again.

There is the unwed teenage expectant mom scared and vulnerable, and yet her love makes her fierce enough and courageous enough to be strong and determined for her unborn child.

There is the heartache of the mother of a special need's child, whose hopes and dreams have been shattered by the reality that her child's life and her motherhood will never be the dream she anticipated, planned or hoped for.

There are mothers who've had abortions, miscarriages, or stillborn babies who awake on Mother's Day who think about and mourn for the loss of their children.

There are SIDS mothers and mothers who had to bury their children due to sickness, injury, crime, war and the harshest of all reasons, the unknown.

There are birth mothers who had to make the incredibly difficult decision to love so much that they released their child to someone else's care, so their child could have a better life than they could possibly give them. Can we even begin to imagine the pain all these mothers awake to on this Mother's Day weekend?

Yes, Mother's Day is a complicated joy.

So, if you are a mom and you feel as though you don't fit into the ideal model of the Mother's Day hoopla then all the cards, gifts, chocolates, flowers, brunches and Mother's Day sermons end up being a reminder of how 'you are not like all the other moms in this dreamy Hallmark

view. Why? Because your experience of motherhood is complex, individual and as unique as you are. Motherhood is far too profound to fit on a Hallmark card because you and your motherhood is all about a lifetime of relationships and not about a Hallmark moment. Human relationships are complicated, and Mother's Day is a complicated joy. Allow me to take you to the place where Mother's Day was truly founded. Let me take you to a wind-swept open field filled with white stone markers. Let me take you to a military funeral in Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D. C., an event that goes on and on everyday throughout this country. Let me bring you graveside to a flag draped coffin of another soldier killed in the line of duty. Watch as the flag is folded by the honor guard and passed into the white gloved hands of the senior officer leading the cortege. Listen as taps are played. Smell the powder as the gun salute is fired. Watch the senior officer march slowly towards a woman doubled over in grief. He bends over to hand her the flag. Feel her pain as she looks up into his face and hears him say, "Ma'am this flag is presented to you on behalf of the President of the United States and a grateful nation as a token of appreciation for your loved ones honorable and faithful service."

Mother's have sat, and continue to sit, in windswept fields of white stone markers next to the flag draped coffins of their sons, daughters and husbands since the Revolutionary War, since the War of 1812, since the Civil War, since the Spanish American War, since World War I, since World War II, since Korea, since Viet Nam, since Iraq, since Afghanistan, since the countless number of skirmishes, special ops, battle and training accidents over the course of this country's very, very short history, Mother's and their families have sat next to the coffins of their beloved children and wept.

The origin of Mother's Day is here in the grave yard. It is deeply rooted in mothers, everyone of them strong women, whose children died in war and who came together to work for Peace, Justice, and Equality who said to the President Woodrow Wilson, enough already, enough!

Mothers are sick to death of war. Mothers are sick to death of seeing their self-less acts of love, their faith, their devotion, their compassion, and their God given virtues which they spent the best parts of their lives teaching their children only to be unlearned and squandered on a battle field. No mother ever raised their child to be killed or to kill another child of another mother in another country. Mothers raise their

children to love. Both of those mothers' weep beside their children's graves. That is where Mother's Day comes from.

My sisters and brothers in Christ, today we honor God's love for us and our relationships with one another, inclusively. No matter how these relationships have developed over the years. Today, this Mother's Day Weekend, we honor and pray especially for all our mothers and their children who are not with them today for whatever reason.

Mother's Day may very well be a complicated joy, but we pray to our loving God and, to His beloved son Jesus to send the Holy Spirit to break open our hearts, so that we may all respond selflessly and love one another as God loves us. AMEN!