

## **Sermon on Motherhood**

### **Easter 5, Year A**

#### **Prayer:**

Open our ears, O Lord, so we may hear your voice in these days and nights of lonely darkness. Speak to us, Lord, and strengthen our wills, that we may serve you and your Kingdom. *Amen*

#### **Sermon:**

Today is Mother's Day.

Take a moment to say Thank You to your Mother!

I am sure that she deserves it...

And I am sure that you know why ...

*But that'll be your secret!*

*You know exactly what I mean!*

In America Motherhood seems to take a back seat  
To so-called "success".<sup>i</sup>

"She's a big deal", one woman might say, ...  
"But I am just a stay-at-home mom."

Even loyal stay-at-mom's sometimes try to jazz it up:  
"You can be a stay at mom, AND  
Still be beautiful and exotic and rich."

Today – just for this moment – let's say NO.  
Today, let's not measure a woman<sup>ii</sup> by what she owns,  
Or how perfect her kids are or how many degrees she has.

That is not how Jesus measured his Mother!  
That is not how Jesus measured the women around him!<sup>iii</sup>

We all acknowledge Jesus as our Lord.

We all acknowledge Jesus as the fully human, Son of God.<sup>iv</sup>

In every moment of his life here, Jesus was both God and man.

He was a real man living in the real world.

And Jesus was a creature of his times and his culture.

He was an authentic person.

He was no more immune to the ways and urges of humanity,

Than we are.

Jesus felt joy, and grief, and anger and sorrow.

We all know the shortest sentence in the New Testament:<sup>v</sup>

“Jesus wept”.

But I can easily imagine Jesus smiling and laughing

With his friends, at the Wedding celebration in Cana.

*Jesus of Nazareth --*

*Born of a woman like all of us – was the real deal.*

Jesus rests with the ages, and yet,

Both fully human and the Son of God,

He’s active in every moment of our day-to-day lives.

There is no better role model than Jesus!

How did Jesus view woman? He cherished them.

In a world where woman were pushed aside and 2<sup>nd</sup> class,

Jesus spoke freely with women.

He healed them.

He stood up for them.

Jesus impressed everyone with his kindness and affection  
Towards woman, and towards Mothers. <sup>vi</sup>

- . Remember the Samaritan woman at the well<sup>vii</sup>?
- . Remember the woman he saved from being stoned? <sup>viii</sup>
- . Remember that Jesus touched Peter's Mother, and healed her?
- . Remember that Jesus healed the woman who touched his cloak?<sup>ix</sup>
- . Remember Jesus, hanging on the cross, cried out to John, <sup>x</sup>  
*"Take care of my Mother"!* <sup>xi</sup>  
Jesus was a devoted son, to his very last breath.

In the Old Testament,  
Woman and Mothers played heroic and important roles. <sup>xii</sup>

Usually when we think of Old Testament heroes we default to  
guys like Moses, and King David.

But women and mothers were also heroes in Old Testament days. <sup>xiii</sup>  
Even against fantastic odds,  
Women and Mothers led their societies forward.  
*They still do today.*

Every once in a while,  
We hear about Abraham, the Father of countless nations.  
Let's not forget that his leadership and his family  
Hinged on his wife Sarah, and her slave Hagar. <sup>xiv</sup>

And what about Pharaoh's unnamed daughter?  
She rescued the infant Moses.

And what about Shiphrah and Puah?

Two humble Hebrew midwives, they saved a nation,  
When they disobeyed Pharaoh's command  
To kill all the newborn Hebrew boys.

And don't forget Delilah.

Way more than a perennial late night Hollywood favorite,  
She was a risk taking hero,  
Known for both her beauty *and* her cunning.

Poor old *Samson!*

*He had the muscles! But he never had a chance!*<sup>xv</sup>

In the midst of God's Salvation plan,

We see women as Mothers and Guardians and Heroes.

Women and Mothers are as full and clear an image of God,  
As has ever been, or *will ever*, be.

Women and Mothers are a vital part of God's majestic work!<sup>xvi</sup>

Even when people do not want to see it or to know it,

God's deep love and esteem for Motherhood  
Shines like a diamond.

Mothers are special. *Every one of them!* <sup>xvii</sup>

Women and Mothers are blessed.

Today we acknowledge, and give thanks for those women  
who aspire to motherhood and those who are mothers.

We like to say that things have changed

In the past few thousand years.

Maybe so.

Women have political rights!

They can vote! They can go to war! They can go to school!

They can be doctors and lawyers and business people.

*And they can stay at home.* <sup>xviii</sup>

They need that choice.<sup>xix</sup>

Women must be free to be and to do,

Whatever God has called them to be and to do!

Yet each Woman lives within the long reach of our World and ...

Its greed and vulgarity. Its lies and deceit.

Our Pornography degrades women,

And it mocks blessed Motherhood.

Our men grow fat and bald and argumentative. And it's OK.

But the World tells women to hide their gray hair,

And that they must be nipped and tucked,

And their graceful beauty hidden.

Some women live with risk and shame and fear,

That Men can never know.

The poverty that can come with a pregnancy,

At the wrong time.

And when a child is born,

She must be educated, and protected and loved and shielded

From a world and from a culture that tells her

She is destined to be a commodity

And a product and a consumer.

There is nothing Godly hidden in those messages.

Each of us is called by Our Father, to honor Motherhood.  
One day a year ... is the least that we can do! <sup>xx</sup>

For more than 50 years our pagan World has torn at  
the joy and the beauty of Motherhood<sup>xxi</sup>.

When a woman chooses a domestic life,  
The World suggests that she is trapped.  
The World will suggest that true joy comes only  
from work “in the real world”, and  
the possessions that such work can bring.<sup>xxii</sup>

These are lies and deception!

God has said:

“As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you....”<sup>xxiii</sup>

*When we honor Mothers, we honor God.*

Motherhood is humanity’s most vital ministry! <sup>xxiv</sup>

God calls each of us to honor our mothers, as Jesus did!  
Women become mothers by God's perfect design.

In the midst of the Virus Craze,  
And the endless political shenanigans,  
And death and loneliness, and poverty and infighting  
Don't we all need a Mother's comfort? <sup>xxv</sup>

*Go say “Thank You” to a Mother.*

-Amen

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<sup>i</sup> Whether in business or academia or the church.

<sup>ii</sup> And men...

<sup>iii</sup> Lots of Christians look backwards and imagine that the “The Bible” holds motherhood in much higher esteem than we do today. The Bible is a compilation of materials written for different cultures, in different languages, edited and translated by many different people, over nearly a thousand years. Maybe so. It is hard to pick out one particular Biblical point of view, towards women. To see Biblical Truth you have to see The Book from some distance. You have to look at the shape of the claims and arguments to see God at work in Creation.

<sup>iv</sup> When it is convenient we focus on his divinity. When it is convenient we focus on his humanity. Yet, see the Nicene Creed (Greek: Σύμβολον τῆς Νικαίας or, τῆς πίστεως, Latin: *Symbolum Nicaenum*) as a statement of belief in Christ’s full participation in both Divinity and Humanity. Adopted at the First Council of Constantinople, in the city of Nicaea (present day İznik, Turkey) in 325, the Creed is widely used in both Western and Eastern Christian liturgies; even while amended several times, it remains substantially unchanged. Of minor note, is that some churches state “We believe” (Oriental Orthodox and Assyrian) while Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic understand the proper wording to be “I believe” (Anglican and Protestant denominations generally use the singular form, as well.) See, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicene\\_Creed#Filioque\\_controversy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicene_Creed#Filioque_controversy)

<sup>v</sup> See, English translations.

<sup>vi</sup> As he impresses us more than 2000 years later.

<sup>vii</sup> John 4:4–26

<sup>viii</sup> John 8:1-11

<sup>ix</sup> See, as to the former, Matthew 8:14-15, Mark 1:30-31, Luke 4:38-39 and as to the latter, Mark 5:25-34.

<sup>x</sup> His dear friend and we believe, the disciple whom he loved.

<sup>xi</sup> “Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, ‘Woman,<sup>[a]</sup> here is your son,’ and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.” John 19:25-27 (NIV)

<sup>xii</sup> Jesus brought God’s ancient story to the real world!

<sup>xiii</sup> Even though they lived in an in an age and in a place where women usually weren’t counted for much.

<sup>xiv</sup> Sarah was initially childless, and as older women, rejected the claims made by an angelic messenger that eh would bear a child. Indeed, "Abraham and Sarah were already very old, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, “After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure?” (Genesis 18:10-15). So, Sarah gave her slave, Hagar, to Abraham to bear children. When she became pregnant with Abraham’s child, Hagar "began to despise her mistress". (Genesis 16:4). Eventually they argued, and Hagar ran away. But, God spoke to her, she came back home, and she gave birth to Ishmael, "a wild donkey of a man" (Genesis 16:12). Later Sarah got pregnant, and her son was Isaac.

<sup>xv</sup> Women and Mothers are as complex and as powerful as any man.

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<sup>xvi</sup> The Bible message is clear: women are key to both Creation and Salvation!

<sup>xvii</sup> “When you’re in the thick of raising your kids by yourself, you tend to keep a running list of everything you think you’re doing wrong. I recommend taking a lot of family pictures as evidence to the contrary.” —Connie Schultz

<sup>xviii</sup> Motherhood is a huge job!

<sup>xix</sup> We all do.

<sup>xx</sup> *And it is not enough!*

<sup>xxi</sup> The Feminine Mystique, (1963) Freidan, Betty.

<sup>xxii</sup> Is it fulfilling to be a Mom? Is it enough?

<sup>xxiii</sup> Isaiah 66:13(NIV)

<sup>xxiv</sup> Some great New Testament period ministers: St. Timothy's grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice. (2 Tim 1:5)

<sup>xxv</sup> ... As an art.