

5th Sunday of Easter
Acts 6:1-7; Psalms 33; 1 Peter 2:4-9; John 14:1-12
Reflection

Dear Parishioners,

What would you do if you had the power to create your own mother? Would you change anything? Would you add anything? Would this have any effect on your identity?

If I was to answer this question, I would say that I would want my mother to be free from the illness that caused her death in 2001. You would have your own answers. But with God, that's a different story. He alone has the power to create his own mother and he did. God created his mother to be free – not from suffering, or poverty, or illness but from the greatest threat to true life and happiness – sin. God created his mother *free* of original sin. While Mary was immaculately conceived her life was not without suffering.

The month of May offers us an opportune time to reflect on and deepen our relationship with the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Church's tradition of the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is not merely a series of prayers and hymn but rather it is a relationship - "*Woman behold your Son.*" "*Behold your mother* (Jn 19: 26-27)." Mary was a lasting gift of her dying son to the Church and to the world. Jesus entrusted the Beloved disciple to Mary on Good Friday and thus entrusted us to her maternal care. He entrusted her to the beloved disciple and thus entrusted his love for his mother to us. Jesus' words cement us into the core of his own love for and trust in of his own mother.

The relationship between Jesus and his Blessed Mother stands as a pillar for the whole world to imitate. In Mary we see the perfection of Womanhood and Motherhood. Mary's poverty and virtue remind me of St Edith Stein's words who said,

“The soul of woman must therefore be expansive and open to all human beings; it must be quiet so that no small weak flame will be extinguished by stormy winds; warm so as not to benumb fragile buds; clear, so that no vermin will settle in dark corners and recesses; self-contained, so that no invasions from without can imperil the inner life; empty of self, in order that extraneous life may have room in it; finally, mistress of itself and also of its body, so that the entire person is readily at the disposal of every call ”¹

In Jesus, who is both human and divine we marvel at the humility befitting of a son in relation to his mother and St Joseph (Matthew 11:29). In Mary we see the openness of heart necessary for doing God's Will. In her Son we discover anew the humility that is necessary for daily conversion and holiness. This daily conversion and conversion serve to keep our hearts untroubled (John 14:1). The good Lord made a promise and he will keep his promise. It's a promise that cements us into his intimate communion with the Father Almighty. There we will enjoy the vision of the face of God in all its glory. Because Jesus had entrusted us to

¹ St Edith Stein, *Essays on Woman* (1996) - *Fundamental Principles of Women's Education* (1931)

the care of his Blessed Mother, she who accompanied him to the glory of the Cross, will accompany us to the glory of heaven.

And so let us therefore labour joyfully on our pilgrimage here on earth. Times are hard and our way of life marked by ‘COVID’ uncertainties. As we all try to ‘flatten the curve’ of the transmission of this mysterious virus, let us curve our way of living to the ways of God in the spirit of Mary.

As we celebrate today Mother’s Day, let us pray that our good Lord will bless our mothers with the grace and holiness with which he clothed his Blessed Mother. As we celebrate our mothers today, let our prayers for them be sincere and grateful. For mothers who have had to bear the pain of burying their children, may the strength of the Blessed Virgin Mary who buried her only child, fortify your faith and hope. For single mothers, I pray that you will always feel the closeness of the Lord and support of God’s faithful people. For mothers separated from their families and children due to hurtful circumstances, may the peace of God which knows no boundaries fill your hearts and minds. For those who do not have to have children, your hearts are never barren for they are full of love and motherliness. This motherliness can transform the church and society for within it is the budding flower of endless possibilities.

“Everywhere the need exists for maternal sympathy and help, and thus we are able to recapitulate in the one word motherliness that which we have developed as the characteristic value of woman. Only, the motherliness must be that which does not remain within the narrow circle of blood relations or of personal friends; but in accordance with the model of the Mother of Mercy, it must have its root in universal divine love for all who are there, belabored and burdened.” (St Edith Stein)

To all our mothers at St Michael Parish, a blessed and happy Mother’s Day!

God bless,

Fr Epeli



Virgin and Child
French
Delacroix, 1835