

[Readings: Acts 1:1-11; Ps. 47; Eph. 4:1-13; Mark 16:15-20]

Happy Mother's Day! It is an appropriate day to consider the ultimate possibilities of love. Through the centuries, women take the risk of love to bring children into the world. Often in terrible circumstances, under difficult, lonely, economically strained conditions. Women became mothers at the risk of their lives in times past and still in many parts of the world where medical care is sketchy or non-existent. And once the children are born, good mothers often continue to put the welfare of their children above their own need for rest, for recreation, for all they might have had without the burden of care for dependent lives.

Whether they stay at home with their children or must work outside to provide their care, mothers remain the primary model of constancy in our world. Even mothers who neglect or deny their children prove the model because we expect them to behave otherwise.

A mother's love is irreplaceable. If we got it from our mothers, it needs no explanation; if we didn't get it, we may spend our whole lives looking for it or suffering from lack of it. A father's love, of course, can be equally heroic and is certainly as indispensable, if in distinct ways. Psychologists have only begun to explore how we need our parents. The happy adult will originally have had, or restored for themselves through mentors, the necessary sources of love and constancy we seem to require at the root of ourselves.

Maybe this isn't so strange, since God is love, and we are God's children. Love is literally at the root of our identity. We seem to know this and need it as much as air, food, and shelter. We're made

from love, and for happiness, according to the most basic catechisms.

Unless and until we discover this love for ourselves, we won't really be happy. Like Augustine said, we're restless until we rest in ultimate love. So Jesus tells us: Remain in me, as I remain in my Father. How do we find our way to this kind of love, especially if we didn't experience it originally or lost it along the way?

First of all, we still call upon Him. We still accept His mission to go out to the entire world and proclaim the Good News. We pray in the words of St. Paul:

"May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, give us a Spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in the full and lasting knowledge of Him. May we live in a manner worthy of the call we have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit."

We are called to accept the mission and to fuel the mission.

Spring is a time of hopeful transitions. The cold death of winter shoots up in the green and brilliance of spring. This is the season for other transitional experiences to happen: graduations, with celebrations and sharing memories of years gone by.

It is also the season for weddings and priesthood ordinations – five men will be ordained to the Priesthood for the Archdiocese of Detroit, this Saturday -- and First Communions and Confirmations.

Today's Feast of the Ascension is very much like that. Traditionally, we are told that forty days lapsed between the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and His return to the

Father in glory. That's why Ascension was celebrated on a Thursday. But for the convenience of working Catholics and the chance to give this feast day the prominence it deserves, it has been moved in most dioceses of our country from Thursday to the Seventh Sunday of Easter. So Ascension Thursday becomes Ascension Sunday!

And what a time of transition this has been for the disciples of Jesus! He is taken up into Heaven. His successor, St. Peter, the First Pope, is a mere shadow of their former leader. So tentative are the Apostles, so frightened still, that they are coached by Jesus to "stay in Jerusalem" and remain there for nine days until the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, the Consoler, the Helper, will come to them. This is the first recorded "novena" or 9-day prayer in the Catholic Church! And they have the Blessed Virgin Mary with them.

The Good News of the Gospel is that the story doesn't end with Jesus returning to Heaven. That's Part II of a three-part story. You and I make up Part III. "All that Jesus did and taught" now becomes all that you and I must do and teach in order for the Kingdom of God to come to earth, and to remain here until Jesus returns for His Great Curtain Call at the end of time. AMEN! ALLELUIA!