

[Readings: Acts 6:1-7; Psalm 33; 1 Peter 2:4-9; John 14:1-12]

Growing up in the Zukowski family, there were two sources of wisdom and knowledge: Dad and Mom. As the years go on, the memory dims, but it seems that whenever we asked Mom a question about faith or life, she always had an answer for us. Maybe not the most theological, but always the most practical. Whenever we asked Dad a question, sometimes, HIS response was: "Go ask your mother!"

We all want answers, and it would be great if things were spelled out for us. But that isn't very often how it goes.

- What questions about my faith, and the way things are, trouble me the most?
- What definition of who Jesus is makes the most sense to me?
- Do I feel chosen and precious in the sight of God, as Saint Paul describes?
- In what ways do I do the works that Jesus did? What more can/should I do?

On this Mother's Day, and this Fifth Sunday of Easter, today's Mass readings provide us with initial answers to these questions.

In our First Reading, we see that in the first decades of the Early Church, as the early Christian community grew, various needs and even conflicts sometimes called for a redefinition and restructuring of ministries. Because of this adaptation to cultural needs, "The word of God continued to spread, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly;" I had to chuckle when I read the next line, "Even a large number of priests were becoming obedient to the faith." Isn't it great to have priests who are obedient to the faith?!"

The role of father and mother in today's culture does not look like the roles of 100 years ago. But the basic mission of parents is there: for fathers to provide, to protect and to give witness by their personal life; for mothers to give life, to nurture and to create. And for both father and mother to lead and to inspire their children by their example of faith. Good parents – good mothers and fathers -- are indispensable for a healthy society and a healthy family life.

Sadly, the present reality is that 61% of all births in our country are to unmarried women. This makes the challenge of parenting even more dependent on the help of God, on the help of the Holy Family and on the wisdom and experience of our Universal Mother, the Church.

The Good News is that however the family finds itself, the possibility is there for us to become "living stones," as St. Peter says in today's Second Reading. "Let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

However healthy or dysfunctional family life has been or is, whatever blessings or mistakes have happened, they become the brick and mortar that form the foundation of our homes and become part of the living Kingdom of God already here on earth.

Our Gospel shows us the process of finding answers to our questions about life and about faith. We are presented with some of the most moving, inspiring words of John's Gospel. I have turned to these words in some of the darker days and moments of my own life.

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God, have faith also in me."

The answers to our questions are revealed when Jesus Christ tells us that this life isn't all that there is. That our priorities point to Heaven and to eternity, and not simply to human existence on earth.

Both Thomas and Philip need more information to process this. Their questions are not those of doubt and uncertainty. They are pleas for a deeper understanding that will lead to a deeper faith. Jesus Christ IS "the way, and the truth and the life." Jesus and His Father ARE one, along with that sometimes elusive Holy Spirit. The answer to all of our deepest questions are answered in faith and in works. In words and in actions.

We thank God for the way our mothers did and continue to provide answers for us. We forgive our mothers who need forgiving, and who somehow fell short or fall short of their sacred identity and sacred mission. We lift up in prayer those mothers who have lost children, regardless of age, or who wanted to have children but could not.

We thank God for those women in our lives who reveal the love, the devotion and the sacrifice of a mother, who showers us with the grace of their love, their wisdom and their experience. We thank God for Mary, the Mother of Jesus, for loving all of us without exception as her adopted sons and daughters. We thank God for Holy Mother, the Church, who brings us sacramental life and grace, who guides us in good times and in bad, and who will be with us faithfully until the end of the ages. So, I ask you:

- What questions about your faith, and the way things are, trouble you the most?
- What definition of who Jesus is makes the most sense to you?
- Do you feel chosen and precious in the sight of God, as Saint Paul describes?
- In what ways do you do the works that Jesus did? What more can/should you do?

Now, go, and ask your mother! ALLELUIA and AMEN!