

4th Commandment, the KJ longer Exodus version, many of us learn from the catechism, **Honor thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth. Honor your mother and by God's grace thou mayest live long on the earth.** The fact any of us have lived long on the earth is by God's mercy, for we haven't, didn't, don't honor our mothers as we should. Forgive us Lord.

What would your mother think? A pretty good litmus test for ethics, morality. What would your mother think? When you teach youth confirmation, the 6th Commandment, about marriage, adultery, immorality, God-given sexual identity, honoring God with our bodies, and the like, they always want to know -how far they can go; how much kissing, touching, hugging is appropriate. I tell them they shouldn't do anything they wouldn't, couldn't, do in their mother's presence. And if there's a way to make adolescents squirm in their chairs, that's it. It conflicts their desire to please the flesh with their desire to please their mothers.

What would your mother think? What if your mother found out all you've done? It should cause you to be uncomfortable, to squirm, squirm there in the pew. I know what you're thinking. I should sit real still right now -so no one sees me looking uncomfortable. We all have reason to squirm, regret, be honest. As cute as it was, when mom asked you if you were in the cookie jar or got into the cake, and you deny it, with crumbs on your face; even then she attended to you in compassion to correct her beloved child, we should be ashamed, for even at an early age, exposes what is in us.

Jesus says today, **keep My commandments.** You hear the word commandment and you don't like to be told what to do. Our old self in us doesn't like rules, commandments. **Abide in My love, keep My commandments.** But if you hear that the wrong way, you turn this into a Law, a burden to obey, instead of living, acting in His gift. The word "keep" is not the word "obey" but "cling to, treasure." Like a keepsake from your mother – even more something you value so greatly and won't ever let go. The "commandments" we are to "keep" are the very gifts that bring His love to us. Love, not of feelings, emotion, when love is spoken in that Epistle, when Jesus speaks of love, this love is self-sacrificing, giving of self. It's His action, from God to you.

Abide in Me, He says this the night He commands, institutes His Supper for you. To abide in Him, He in us -no other way- than His Word, His Sacraments. His commandments, His tangible gifts that join you to His life, His love. The fruit you bear is His forgiveness, His works, His life. **That my joy be in you, your joy be full.** To know His joy in you when you serve and love and forgive.

My joy, in you, that your joy be full. Full joy -not from having what we want or seeing good things come our way nor achievements or success - those only bring momentary joys. **Abide in Me.** Even in the midst of messes of life, you're in full possession of this joy; just as He promised. Your joy comes in a His life-giving kingdom of gift, and grace, and blessing.

Dear Christians, one and all, rejoice! Oh, understand this joy is not the same as being happy. His joy is not earned, not a choice, or feeling or your change of your attitude; not in denial of life's messes, escaping your reality; doesn't mean you smile all the time; don't have troubles.

It is your reality, joy of living, knowing: **But God had seen my wretched state, Before the world's foundation, And mindful of his mercies great, He planned for my salvation. He turned to me a father's heart; He did not choose the easy part. But gave his dearest treasure.** Do you see this changes everything for you?

Scripture shows over 300 references to joy, overflowing. Do you not see it? Or better, how can you not live this out. **Abide in Me** and love to others. What is it that makes Christian joy and the joy of the Divine Service so profound, so expansive, so freeing, so...joyful? The continued delight, wonder, objective truth of His ongoing works in Your life, His life even given to you here, drawn into His presence.

You come burdened, leave here with His joy. Great wonder of wonders the Lord and all of heaven only rejoices over repentant sinners. To Abide in you, what you truly need, to fill you with His joy and life of good news in a bad news world. Filled with His love, resurrected life. Filled with forgiveness, filled with His sacraments.

Thank God for providing for us the Church as Mother, where He provides for you protects, feeds, nourishes, speaks to you with words that death cannot remove, that not only that thou mayest live long on the earth, but live for eternity, forever knowing the embrace of your mother. **I choose you.** You are mine. **Abide in Me. My joy in you.**