

“Mother’s Day”

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### **Opening Prayer**

Good morning, and Happy Mother’s Day! God willing everything is going well for you, especially for you moms. This is a strange Mother’s Day, as we all know, because perhaps for the first time (maybe ever) for many of us we will not be able to see our loved ones. No parades, no big get togethers, and maybe even limited contact or no contact with the ladies whom we love. With that being said, God is still in control, we still love our mothers, and we can rest in the knowledge that the Lord loves our moms (or for you mothers our children) even more than we do. As a side note, many of the wonderful mothers amongst us have suffered the loss of their children whether before birth or after, and to you mothers who have suffered loss we remember you and we love you too. Your children were and are loved by the Lord too, and you are celebrated today as well. Many prayers are prayed for you. With all of that being said, our two readings for today continue our themes of hope and joy that we have been working through in quarantine by talking about one of the most beautiful things that God has ever given us... our mothers.

Moms, you have a special hand in the creation of your children. Psalm 139:1-16 is a very famous Psalm. It is a Psalm attributed to King David, and it is a great and loving prayer that he prays to God. It shows the love that the Lord has for him, and he acknowledges it. “O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you understand my thought from afar.” Sounds kind of like my mother to me! The Lord, David acknowledges, knows him implicitly. There isn’t anything David has done or will ever do (and us too by the way) that the Lord is not aware of. Furthermore, it isn’t that the Lord is just watching over our shoulder looking to catch us in sin, instead the Lord watches over us to protect us much like a good parent. Verses 7-10 confirm this by saying “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, even there Your hand will lead me, and Your right hand will lead me.” This prayer is one that we should look at often and take to heart. It perfectly encapsulates how the Lord not only feels about David, but also about how He feels about us. By extension too, our good mothers share many of these qualities.

In times of crisis like this, we can easily forget that the Lord really loves us. We can forget that, amid the sinful world we live in, that He has gone to the cross for us and died for us. We can forget the love that He holds for you and me. Continuing in this Psalm David speaks about how we are made in verses 13-16, and how it is a loving and joyous creation. A creation that our mothers are very much involved in.

“For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; You eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.” Beloved Congregation, we have spent some time talking about how much joy and hope we can have in the midst of worrying crisis. If you needed a couple of verses to remind you that your hope is not misplaced in the Lord, look at these. It is a stark reminder, perfect for us to look at on Mother’s Day, that the Lord has created you. “For you formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” Your life is no accident, and who you are is no accident. I don’t know if there is any greater joy in this world than seeing a child enter it, and that is a direct result of His loving hands. Our mothers, bless them, have an intimate hand in the joy of our creation because obviously they carry us for nine (give or take) months.

Currently, as most of you know, my wife is about five months pregnant with our first child... a baby girl. Now we don’t know much about her. From the ultrasound we can tell that she is healthy, and maybe that she has her daddy’s nose, but that is about it. We don’t know who she will be, what she will do, where she will go, who she will marry, what her calling in life is, or even what she sounds like. Yet, specifically because she is ours, we love her so much it hurts. Those of you who are parents understand, and those of you who do not have kids but had wonderful parents understand. Now think about how much the Lord loves us. (As a side note, if you were to look for verses that go against the concept of abortion, this is a primary place to start because it notes conception as the beginning of life. This is the traditional view of all the great Christian leaders of the last two thousand years.) A mother, who has never seen her child in the flesh, lovingly and expectantly waits for her child and prays for her child and after that child is born seeks to raise that child well. The Lord, who knows perfectly who we are (even better than ourselves!), loves us even more. That isn’t me being mean by the way, only the Lord Himself in His infinitude can surpass a good mom’s love. Everything, as David mentioned in verse sixteen, is open to the Lord. Every detail of our lives He has known for all eternity. Even though we sin and struggle, yet He loves us so much that He was willing to go the cross in our place... before any of us were even born! What I am trying to say, Beloved, is that the closest thing we have to understanding just how much God loves us can be found in a good and loving mother who gives birth to us. Both have a hand in our creation, and both deserve praise this morning... and really every other morning.

While our first reading out of Psalms gives us a clue into how much the Lord loves us, the second reading from the Gospel of Luke helps us to understand this concept of love even more. For our second reading we read Mary’s “Magnificat” out of Luke chapter one. Usually this is a piece of scripture that we read nearing Christmas, but seeing as how Mary is the mother of

Jesus it is appropriate on Mother's Day too. It comes at a time in her life before she is even pregnant with Jesus. In Luke 1:26 we got some backstory, that it was the angel Gabriel who came and told her that she was the most favored of women and that she was going to give birth, as a virgin, to the Savior of the world. By the way, for those of you who wonder why certain segments of the universal church talk so much about Mary, this is why. My mother and my grandmother, who themselves grew up as devout Catholics as the daughters of very devout Catholics, understands this from a different perspective than we Protestants often do. Mary, the mother of Jesus, after she hears from Gabriel and later from her relative Elizabeth that she is going to give birth to the Savior, breaks out into a joyous song of praise that we call the Magnificat. It tells of the joys that are to come regarding her Son and how blessed she is to be a part of God's great plan.

"My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior." (Vs. 46-47) She begins her song of praise by just recognizing that it is Him that she finds joy. "For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; for behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed." She isn't wrong to recognize that she has been blessed. Any mother worth their salt will say this about having children, but Mary in humility acknowledges that God has given her a great blessing that she did not earn by making her the mother of Jesus. "He has given help to Israel His servant, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever." (Vs. 54-55) Mary acknowledges that by the birth of her Son, God's only Son, Jesus the Christ, that Israel (and by extension the whole world) will be blessed. Imagine the joy that she must have felt to know that not only was she going to be a mother, but that her Son was going to be the one to bring about all of God's promises here on earth. Now at this point you may be saying "That is great and all Pastor Jake, but what does it have to do with our topic for today?" Well Beloved Congregation, we shouldn't forget that the blessing given here to Mary and to the whole world comes at a cost. A cost which Mary likely didn't know, and which no one else at the time would have realized. The blessing we receive from our loving Father, is that His Son takes our place on the cross. Moms out there, I don't have to tell you this, but being a mother comes at a cost.

The ones we love most in this life, the family and friends that are the closest to us, are the ones who have the greatest propensity to hurt us. In the case of children, kids do dumb stuff. They say some dumb things, they get mischievous, and even the best of kids can be hurtful and hard to raise. But, again I don't have to tell you mothers this, there is such a great joy in the process and so much love in seeing your child grow that the pain is worth it. The pain of childbirth, the pains of adolescence, the hurts that come from seeing your kid move across state or endure their own pain, all of it is still worth it because that child brings such joy. I am not qualified to talk about motherhood of course, but even just in observing Rhianna in her pregnancy there is such joy. Here we are in the middle of a horrible pandemic, everything is locked down, life is all screwed up, and yet every day she is smiling and calling herself blessed. Every kick from that

little one, usually into her bladder, is a reminder that “I’m here mom, its ok mom, I’m doing fine mom...” Mothers, there is a blessing given to you to be a part of God’s most favorite creations.

In our readings both Mary’s words of praise and David’s words of praise are accurate. They both acknowledge that the Lord loves us. Neither knew, at least at the time, that the Lord was going to step in and take our punishment for us like He did. Jesus, God in human flesh, does the unthinkable out of love for His creation. The Lord loves you, Beloved, enough to die for you. As we remember our mothers today and celebrate them (give her a call or write her a letter for crying out loud!) we should also remember that God loves us deeply. Beloved, wherever you are this morning, whether your spirits are high or low, whether you feel frustrated or elated or whatever else, know that your Lord deeply cares for you more than you could ever imagine. Kind of like your mom. Let us pray.

### **Closing Prayer**