

I would like to wish everyone a Happy Mother's Day. I know that this is a joyful day for many, while I also know that Mother's Day can stir up a lot of emotions, heartache, and pain...

Especially for those of you who have lost your mothers... or those who have lost your spouse and the one who brought your child into this world... Those who have endured the horrific loss of a child... For those who cannot have children. For those who have an unhealthy relationship with their mom... And for those who never knew their mom.

And if you are someone who finds difficulty with Mother's Day, it is my hope, that this sermon will speak to you in ways that are life giving. As the unconditional love of a mother, can be found in many different forms and in untraditional spaces... Let us pray...

Mothering God, for those who are grieving this Mother's Day surround them with your comfort, peace, and love. Provide them healthy ways to grieve and opportunities to turn towards others for consolation.

We ask that you fill our hearts with your mothering love...

May we feel your divine presence, and may your divine Love continue to live among us... May there be many moments of joy, with mothers and with the mother figures in our lives... Amen

In the 1953 Walt Disney movie, Peter Pan, Wendy Darling sings a lovely song to her brothers and the lost boys, and she asks this question in her song...

What makes mothers all that they are? Might as well ask what makes a star?
Ask your heart to tell you her worth, your heart will say, heaven on earth...
Another word for divine, Your mother and mine...

Now, if I could sing as beautiful as Kathryn Beaumont, the voice of Wendy in that film, I would have sung this for you, but I think these words, even spoken are still beautiful.

And interestingly, these lyrics coincide lovingly with our gospel reading from today.

As our gospel reading is all about creating heaven on earth with the presence of someone that is quite similar to a mother...

And I think our gospel today is so appropriate for Mother's Day, as this presence, like a mother's presence is something truly unique...

Which I can attest to from my own amazing mom, and also from all of you wonderful moms... Seeing all that you do, I know that each one of you are more than a mother...

For some, this might include step-mom, grandma, great grandma, or aunt... But for all of you it includes so much more... Perhaps, cook, cleaner, bather, educator, driver, comforter, fight stopper, snuggler, planner, working-mom, to basically running around not knowing which way is up some days...

And yet you persist, you show up, you love, and you give it your all...

You love your children, because you want what is best for them, and you do your best to ensure that they have a good, happy, and love-filled life...

Which is also what God wants for each of you and for all of God's children.

And so, God sends us someone, like a mother, someone who is up for the challenge and who can persist in this messy, complex, and crazy world that we live in.

Because God's love is so great, God has sent us someone to live with us forever... our paraclete, or as our gospel translated, our advocate...

And just like there are many different words for all that a mother does, there are also many different translations for paraclete...

For example, some translations include, helper, comforter, intercessor, counselor, strengthener, standby, and redeemer...

And yet, this paraclete is specifically referring to the Holy Spirit, and is referenced with the general understanding as someone who is called to come alongside...

Which, as most of you know, and especially you mothers, coming alongside someone else, is never just a walk in the park...

And yet, when you truly love someone, especially with a mothering kind of unconditional love, it doesn't matter how rough the road gets, or how deep the valleys become...

As you find strength and endurance in your love... Which allows you to continue alongside them...

Your love draws you close to them, brings them encouragement, and provides guidance...

While at other times there might be misunderstandings, and moments when words are not enough... And there may be times when all you do is sit together, hold each other, and cry...

Because this is a sacred love. A love that never tires, because no matter how old your baby gets, they will always be your child.

Which is why all of us are also children... We are God's children... And You are a beloved child of God...

Love that is deeper than our understanding. Because God's love is stronger than the bonds between a mother and a child, as God's love even eradicates death...

In Christ's death new life was birthed and the Holy Spirit was poured out... As it was only in Christ's death that we received the Holy Spirit, our advocate to live with us forever...

Love that lingers on with us in every moment, because God's love remains...

And this was so important for us to know, that Jesus took the time to tell his disciples how to live, and to continue his farewell discourse so that we know without a doubt, we are not alone...

And even though this is a farewell discourse, we discover through Christ's words that this is not farewell... Jesus isn't saying see you later...

Jesus is actually saying... See you ALWAYS....

As it is through God's love and the presence of the Holy Spirit, that Christ is with us.

Because of Christ, we know that even in death... love lingers on...

Which is similar to what happens when our loved ones die...

Because that love is never lost... Their love and your love for them lives on.

They are resurrected in Christ, and in a way, they are also resurrected inside of you... In ways that manifest from your love, their love, and God's love...

Because they live on in Christ...

And since it is in Christ that we live and move and have our being, and since the Holy Spirit lives and dwells within us...

Then we are always and forever connected.... To each other, to our loved ones, and to God...

Because love is what brings heaven on earth... In the presence of the Holy Spirit, and in the love that we have for one another...

Because it is just like Wendy sang in Peter Pan... A mother is heaven on earth, and another word for divine...

For we experience God in all forms of love, as it is in love where God dwells.

Love that lingers on in the presence of the Spirit, in the resurrection of Christ, and in the resurrection of love that lives on in each one of you.

Amen.