

Thanksgiving for the Gift of Mothers

Prayer Service for the Month of May

INTRODUCTION

Good morning, and welcome to this prayer service in thanksgiving for the gift of our mothers. It is May, and all around us are signs of new life – in our fields, lakes, ponds, rivers and forests. Birds are building their nests, fish are spawning in the shallows, and a long-awaited emerald brilliance begins to blanket our yards and trees. How fitting that in this time of newly emerging life, we honour the mothers who carried us for nine months, brought us into the world, and taught us the values we live by. Please join us in our opening song:

OPENING SONG

OPENING PRAYER

And let us pray: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
Lord, we bless you for having brought us into this world through our mothers. Open our hearts this morning that we might joyfully praise and thank you for the precious gift they are in each of our lives. We make this prayer to you in the name of Jesus, your Son, born of a mother in the fullness of time. Amen.
And now, let us be attentive to God's word.

READING

A reading from the second letter of Paul to Timothy (2Tim 1: 3-5)
I am grateful to God – whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did – when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure lives in you.
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God

RESPONSE (Prov 31: 28, 29, 31)

R. *We praise you, O Lord, for the gift of our mothers.*

Her children rise up and call her happy;
Her husband too, and he praises her: **R/**

“Many women have done excellently,
But you surpass them all.” **R/**

Give her a share in the fruit of her hands,
And let her works praise her in the city gates. **R/**

REFLECTION

Part of the beauty of our faith is its celebration of what is most deeply human in us. Such qualities are in some mysterious way a reflection of the God in whose image and likeness we are made. How fitting that we celebrate the gift of motherhood, which not only reflects, but participates in God's own life-giving nature. Here is what the Bible has to say:

If there is a likeness between Creator and creatures, it is understandable that the Bible would refer to God using expressions that attribute to him both "masculine" and "feminine" qualities. We may quote here some characteristic passages from the prophet *Isaiah*: "But Zion said, 'The Lord has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me'. 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will *not* forget you'" (49:14-15). And elsewhere: "As one whom his *mother* comforts, so will I comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem" (66: 13). In the Psalms too God is compared to a caring mother: "Like a child quieted at its mother's breast; like a child that is quieted is my soul. O Israel, hope in the Lord". (*Ps* 131:2-3). In various passages the love of God who cares for his people is shown to be like that of a mother: thus, *like a mother God* "has carried" humanity, and in particular, his Chosen People, within his own womb; he has given birth to it in travail, has nourished and comforted it (cf. *Is* 42:14; 46: 3-4). In many passages God's love is presented as the "masculine" love of the bridegroom and father (cf. *Hosea* 11:1-4; *Jer* 3:4-19), but also sometimes as the "feminine" love of a mother. (John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, No. 8)

So much of what we do in Catholic education has a motherly quality, be it in planting, gestation or birthing. In a real sense, our classrooms and schools afford something akin to the safety of a womb for children coming from unstable homes where the tranquility of order and even food are in short supply. How often have we seen children spontaneously call a teacher or EA "Mom" (or "Dad") because of the nurturing relationship their presence has come to mean in their lives. If any of us looks on students or staff in our care with the eyes of a nurturing parent, it is because we are hard-wired this way by a God who gazes on us with the same overflowing heart of a mother.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Let us take a few moments to place our needs in God's hands, through the intercessory presence of Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

Our response will be: *Hear us, O Lord, through Mary, our Mother.*

For the Church, that her members might be renewed in faith, hope and love. We pray...

For the world, that all God's children might learn to live in peace. We pray...

For the needs of all who suffer in our homes, offices, schools, communities and world. We pray...

For our mothers, both living and deceased, and all their needs. We pray...

For ourselves, that we might walk in ever-greater trust in God's loving care. We pray...

For those needs unspoken and remaining in our hearts. We pray

Let us entrust all our prayers spoken and remaining in our hearts, to Mary's motherly intercession with her divine and human Son.

Hail Mary...

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, we thank you for the gift of our mothers, through whom you brought us into this world for a life with you forever in eternity. We ask you to bless them and us, as we continue on our pilgrimage from conception and birth to our heavenly home. We ask you this in Jesus' name.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

CLOSING SONG

Please join in our closing song: