

My dear friends in Christ,

Once the lockdown period started, the hard thing for us priests is to say the daily Mass looking at the empty pews and all the more to say the homily. However, I will try my best to imagine your faces and the places you usually sit in the church.

Through the scriptural passages on every Sunday, the church unfolds the salvation history and makes us its partakers. Because *There's more in the Sunday Gospel than Meets the Eye*

Last Sunday, thanks to Fr Michael, for giving us a smooth and uninterrupted beautiful homily on the interrupted homily of St Peter. And how those interruptions to Peter's homily were the beginnings of a new church, presenting Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

In today's first reading, we see how various talents of the members of the early Christian community were channelized for the good of the community. That was a remarkable recommendation of the first pastoral council in the history of the church. It calls us today to come forward to avail ourselves with our talents of time and resources, to promote others and to nurture, to share and grow together in the church.

In today's Gospel Jesus declares that He is the **TRUTH**, the **WAY** and the **LIFE**. Yes, Jesus is the only and true

way to the Father, He is the true Son of God, and He is the full Life Himself.

Today is Mother's Day. As I was praying over this great day in light of today's gospel, three important messages came to my mind;

1) It is the mother who first teaches us the way to God.

She was the first one, while feeding me on her lap, who pointed towards Jesus' picture and told me, ***"Look, this is Jesus, that is Mother Mary"***. She was the one who first took me to church for baptism, she was the one who took the initiative to send me to a Catholic school and for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation.

2) She is the reflection of truth: Mother understands us. She gets us and accepts us because she knows the truth in us. All of us would agree that no one on this earth can understand us more than our mothers.

Any appliance or electronic device we buy comes with a manual or instruction booklet. But we know life does not come with a manual, but it comes with a mother.

My mother is the best manual for me. She has got all the troubleshooting techniques for my problems.

3) She inspires me with new life. She gave birth to me and she continues to support my life as long as she can.

Even after death she inspires me. Her love is life for me.

One aspect of Mother Mary's life, that has meaning and inspiration for many mothers today, is the profound

suffering that she endured during the passion of Our Lord. Mary stood at the foot of the cross.

To all mothers and grandmothers: All sufferings have power when you unite your suffering to the cross of Jesus. Take your suffering, united to the suffering of Jesus, and offer that suffering for your children & grandchildren.

Because many mothers still pray like St Monica and therefore God can make St Augustines even today.

Of course as part of the yearly celebrations, we wish our mothers and grandmothers and who do the role of a mother... But more than wishing just for today what else can we do or what are the essential duties of husbands and children.

To Husbands: You have the solemn duty to sacrifice yourselves continually in your total love for your wives and your children with many acts of patience, kindness and service.

To children: You through loving obedience should become a joy and not a burden to your mothers and grandmothers. You should make them proud of being your mother by good behaviour. *As we learn in book of proverbs 1:8-9 “Hear, my son, your father’s instruction, and forsake not your mother’s teaching, for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck.”*

A house is a physical place. A home is where our loved ones are gathered. It is not easy being a mother.. If it were easy, fathers would do it

A young family recently moved into the parish. In meeting them, the priest asked the children how they liked their new home. The 8 year old son said, *"It's really great. I have my own room and so do my other brothers. We all have our own rooms...except poor Mom, she's still in with Dad...and he snores really loud. Poor Mom, indeed..."*

In fact, many dedicated women have assisted me in my ministry as a priest, I have also received many spiritual mothers and many spiritual sisters, many of whom have become life-long friends.

Let us salute our mothers: : Let us admit gratefully the fact that none of us is able to return, in the same measure, all the love that our mothers have given us. There is a beautiful Spanish proverb: *"An ounce of mother is better than a pound of clergy."*

Let us offer mothers on the altar today

We offer this Eucharistic celebration on Mother's Day for all the mothers in our parishes, whether they are alive or have left for heaven.

Every Christian has two mothers: one earthly mother and the other our Heavenly Mother, the Mother of Jesus. The Catholic Church proclaims and presents her as the supreme model for all mothers.

*Let me conclude with a prayer for our Mothers
Loving God,
We pray for our own mothers who gave birth to us...
for new mothers, coming to terms with new responsibility;*

*for expectant mothers, wondering and waiting;
for those who are tired, stressed or depressed;
for those who struggle to balance the tasks of
work and family;
for those who are unable to feed their children
due to poverty;
for those whose children have got special needs;
for those who raise children on their own;
for those who have lost a child;
for those who care for the children of others;
for those whose children have left home;
and for those whose desire to be a mother
has not been fulfilled.*

*Bless all mothers, that their love may be deep and tender,
and that they may lead their children to know
and do what is good,
living not for themselves alone,
but for God and for others. **Amen.***