

## Happy Mother's Day!

We will celebrate Mother's Day on Sunday May 14<sup>th</sup>. Mother's Day is universally seen as a tribute to all mothers and to motherhood. The tributes paid to mothers come in many forms. The first tributes take the form of handmade gifts made at school and/or Sunday School. Mothers cherish these little gifts, that only they could love, often keeping them for decades.

As children get older, their tributes change. They often give her flowers. It is estimated that 25% of all the fresh flowers sold in North America by retailers in any given year are sold on Mother's Day weekend. A survey conducted by the National Retail Federation, found that 69 percent of those celebrating Mother's Day will buy their mothers flowers, spending an estimated \$2.6 billion in 2017.

Children that are far away give mom a telephone call. The volume of telephone calls increases dramatically on Mother's Day. The spike in call volume on Mother's Day is higher than the spike in calls on any other holiday of the year.

Many children both young and old will buy or make their mom a Mother's Day card. It is estimated that about \$671 million is spent on Mother's Day cards annually. Hallmark alone sold 133 million Mother's Day cards in 2015. Mother's Day cards extoll a mother's virtues. The message of one Mother's Day card declared: *"Mentor, Organizer, Taxi driver, Handyman, Educator, Referee... these don't even begin to describe all the things a mother has to be. To me, you're just the best mom ever. Happy Mother's Day!"* Another card declared: *"Mother stands for: Magnificent, Optimistic, Trust-worthy, Heroine, Entertaining, Romantic. To me, you mean all of this and much more. I love you mom. Happy Mother's Day!"*

On Mother's Day, Christians are called to remember that God showed His great love and esteem for mothers and motherhood through Jesus. God chose and called a woman named Mary from the town of Nazareth, to be the mother of His Son. She was a virgin, betrothed to a descendant of the great King David. Mary responded to God's call with a humble yes. She put God's plans and the birth of His Son, ahead of her own plans. The child's conception was miraculous and immaculate, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' conception and birth redeemed conception and birth from the power of sin.

Mary's 'yes' to God's plan had personal costs. She was betrothed or engaged to Joseph. The Law demanded she be a virgin when her engagement ended and she went to live with Joseph. She was pregnant before their marriage was consummated. Her husband and her community were startled and appalled. The gossip mill began churning. She bore the shame and the gossip. God spoke to her husband Joseph in a dream and gave him the grace to believe Mary's testimony and adopt the child.

God created women to be mothers, to give the gift of life. He gave them a powerful love for their children. A mother's love is unconditional. It is expressed in the care, nurture and protection they shower on their children. A mother always thinks twice, once for herself, then for her children and always puts her children first. God used Mary and the love he had planted within her to raise Jesus. In this way, Jesus redeemed childhood and youth from the power of sin.

Mary's love for Jesus was expressed to the bitter end. The Gospels declare that on the first Easter weekend, Jesus' disciple Judas betrayed him to the political and religious leaders of the day. Peter denied Jesus and fled for his life. Then all but one of the other disciples hid away in fear. However, through all this Mary was resolute. She and Apostle/Disciple John stood at the foot of the cross as Jesus suffered and died. She watched as Jesus paid the price for our sin by his innocent suffering and death. Mary had seen Jesus take his first breath and utter his first word. She saw him draw his last breath and say his last words: "It is finished." She witnessed the cost of our salvation. Acts 1:14 records that Mary was with the disciples after the resurrection. She witnessed Pentecost and the birth of the Body of Christ, the Holy Christian Church.

Jesus showed his great love for his mother moments before his demise. *"When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home."* (John 19:26-27).

On Mother's Day, Christians are called to give God thanks and praise for the gift of motherhood and for our mothers. We are called to thank God for using mothers to pass the faith on to their children. The Apostle Paul wrote this to Timothy: *"I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also."* (2 Timothy 1:5). Paul reminds us that it was his mother and grandmother who sowed the seeds of faith that blossomed later in Timothy's life.

Give your mom a great gift this Mother's Day. Take her to church near you and thank God for her. At Grace Lutheran, we will thank God for our mothers on Sunday the 14<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 and 10:30 AM. We hope to see you!

In Christ, Pastor Ed Skutshek