

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Tomorrow/day is the day we set aside each year to honor our Mothers. All of us have learned a great deal from our Mothers. For instance my Mother taught me how to pray when she would arch her right eyebrow and give me what we called “the look”, I would silently cry to God, “Please God, don’t let her kill me. I’m only seven years old”.

My Mother taught me about medicine: All you needed to stay healthy was a daily dose of castor oil, a Bayer aspirin if you were catching a cold, and a shot of Irish whiskey and go to bed if you had a fever. It worked. We rarely got sick.

My Mother taught me how to be a contortionist: “Will you look at the dirt on the back of your neck!”

My Mother taught me to be a leader: “I don’t care what everyone else is doing,” continuing as she smacks me up-side the head and beats my back, “wipe that wool off your back. Don’t be a sheep. Be a shepherd.”

My Mother taught me to appreciate what I have: “I don’t care that your feet hurt. I just bought those shoes six months ago. Thank God for them. Stop growing!”

It was the wisdom of my sainted Grandmother, Nellie McNamara McGivney that reminded me of my mortality by awakening me each morning with the not-so-gentle reminder: “Boy, get out of that bed. You’ll be a long time dead.”

Finally, my Mother taught me logic: “Because I said so, that’s why”.

Did any of you have Mothers like that? Are any of you Mothers like that?

Here’s a more profound question. Is there a Mother who has ever given birth who doesn’t pray for her children every day? Some days she prays with gratitude; some with fear, concern, or anxiety; other days she prays in exasperation; and, then, there are those who pray in great sorrow. A Mother can’t help but pray for those who came forth from her own being.

Likewise we hear Christ today praying for the Church, born of His suffering, dying, and rising. He prays for us as a Mother prays for the child of her womb, “Holy Father, keep them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one just as we are one. When I was with them, I protected them in your name that you gave me, and I guarded them...But now I am coming to you. I speak this in the world so that they may share my joy completely...I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you keep them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. Consecrate them in the truth. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I sent

them into the world. And I consecrate myself for them, so that they also may be consecrated in truth.”

So Jesus prays for us today. He prays first of all that we may be one as He and the Father are one. He prays that there be no divisions among us and that we love one another as He and the Father love one another.

Isn't that so much like the prayer of a Mother for her family? Nothing is more hurtful to the heart of a Mother than to see her children fighting and feuding with one another. It tears her to pieces when her children are being mean or spiteful or uncaring of each other.

That's something else my Mother taught me. No matter what we had been arguing or fighting about my Mother always made me and my sisters kiss and make up, no matter how grudgingly we did it, before we went to bed, telling us to “never let the sun go down on your anger”.

How much more must it tear at the heart of Christ when He sees how we have divided up His Church. Oh, we happily sing the song, “We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord. We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord; and we pray that all unity will one day be restored; and they'll know we are Christians by our love. Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.”

I submit for your consideration today that, perhaps, the Church has been marginalized in our society today because of the disunity, and, yes, the lack of love between us. So, yes, the Lord continues even today praying that we love one another as He and the Father love one another.

Then, we hear the Lord praying that we may share His joy completely. So, we might ask ourselves if His prayer is effective in our lives. Does our coming together week after week with the Lord and with each other fill us with so much joy that it pervades our very being so as to confound those who live in the world. They will either hate us for it or decide that they want what we have, and come with us to share our Master's joy.

Or do we leave here as miserable as we came in, simply satisfied that we have fulfilled a duty or had our ticket punched? Then go back out to spew out our misery on an already miserable world.

That kind of reminds me of something else my Mother taught me, “Never air our dirty laundry in public.” That meant that if there were problems in the house or among the family, don't talk about it publicly. Only talk about what was good and right and happy in public. Maybe we ought to do the same with regard to our Church.

Finally, Jesus tells the Father that as the Father has sent Him into the world to proclaim the truth of His love for His people, so Jesus sends us into the world to proclaim the truth

of that love. Then He consecrates us to bring that truth to the world. That is our mission as surely as it is Jesus' continued mission—to proclaim the truth of God's love by giving joyful witness to how God has loved us.

When is the last time you told the story of God's goodness to you? Do you go to work or to school or to the Walmart and tell a neighbor or a co-worker or a friend on Monday morning about what a friend you found in Jesus in your worship on Saturday evening or Sunday morning? Do you tell them how much you love your Church Family? Or how amazingly brilliant and good looking your Pastor is?(just checking to see if you're paying attention).

You've gotten my point! We have been sent by the Lord. It is not a suggestion. It is a command. He has consecrated us and sent us into the world to proclaim the GOOD NEWS of God's abundant, merciful, already-forgiving love for us. That is as surely the reason we have been born in Him in Baptism as we have been born from our Mothers' wombs into this world.