



*Mother and Child, Wayside Shrine
New Harmony, IN*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

Happy Mother's Day!

It is occasion for us to pause and give thanks for those who brought us to life. Even as social distancing might prevent real-time gatherings of families this day...thank your Mother. For those of us who "salute them on that other shore," know that they are in "that better light." Pause today, and remember one thing your Mother taught you; if not in a clear saying or instruction, then by her example; or ponder what you have come to understand about yourself because of your being in relationship with her. You see, there are many ways in which our mothers teach us life; many rooms in the household of our families.

There are many rooms, Our Lord says to Thomas in today's Gospel. A heavenly mansion that must have an infinite number of rooms, I would think, with an equally infinite number of doors. Isn't that what you make of the image? I often have, and do. If and when I get to heaven, by God's grace, I can just go to my room, and shut the door. And shut everyone and everything out. Sounds like heaven to me! But, that is the exact opposite of Christian charity, isn't it? It's certainly a far cry from Mom's "learn to play with your brother!"

Rooms, many rooms, in the Gospel sense – in the “what our mothers teach us sense” – aren’t the final destination, the places we end up, but the places and spaces and experiences in which we pause for a while and then pass on to other rooms. They are like wayside shrines; opportunities to call upon the Holy One wherever we might be. There will be many places and spaces, moments and encounters, life experiences and persons that we engage, that will shape who we are and who we will become.

And we all have different rooms. We will not live each other’s life; we don’t have to and we can’t. We will live our life, and no one else’s. It should go without saying, but I will say it anyway, “so don’t try!”

Even as each one of our lives is uniquely loved by God (like a Mother’s love, I might add) and uniquely lived, there still remains that which identifies all of them as fully human, or not. One standard; one measure of authenticity. Our Lord also says to Thomas in today’s Gospel “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me.” What does that mean?

It’s confusing: first there are many rooms, then there’s only one way. We’re more accustomed, in post-modern society and thinking, to think that every way is equally valid, that truth is what I want it to be in this moment, but we better live in the same room. The Christian truth is that each life is uniquely loved, created, and lived, and the way to live such a life fully is to love. Again, Mom saying “you don’t have to be them, but you have to love them!”

So, it’s not a retreat unto myself, into the celestial room where the door closes and locks. Not an insistence upon my right to do as I choose. Not an assertion of power. But a choice to love. To sacrifice. To serve. I can’t live your life and shouldn’t try. But I must always ask myself how my life choices impact your ability to live your life as fully as I wish to live mine. What reasonable precautions am I willing to take that you might live life in the first place? Aren’t these the fundamental questions set before us in this time of pandemic? And is Jesus, The Way, The Truth, The Life, the answer we’re giving with our lives?

If our answer is yes, well, I trust our mothers’ joy is complete.

Sincerely yours in the Risen Christ,
Fr. Grogan

***Loving God,
as a mother gives life and nourishment to her children,
so you watch over your Church.
Bless these women,
that they may be strengthened as Christian mothers.
Let the example of their faith and love shine forth.
Grant that we, their sons and daughters,
may honor them always
with a spirit of profound respect.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.***

***The Blessing of Mothers on Mother’s Day
The Book of Blessings***