

# From the Pastor's Desk

## **Some comments on my Mother's Day Homily**

This past Sunday was Mother's Day. My Sunday homily was an attempt to give reflections and moral encouragement regarding mothers and motherhood. I also attempted to make certain theological arguments on topics related to mothers, motherhood, parenthood, family, and the socialization of children to grow up to be good mothers, fathers and spouses.

The homily received mixed reviews, to say the least. Several women and men who are wives and mothers, husbands and fathers, liked the homily very much; they believed that it was a much needed defense and explanation of Catholic teaching, as well as a grateful and encouraging celebration of the vocation of motherhood. They smiled and thanked me on the way out the door. The vast majority of the people simply walked out the church doors without comment, other than to say "Happy Mother's Day" or "Have a good week".

However, more than a few were very upset, even outraged, by what I said in this homily. While they were polite and chose not to confront me with their objections or dismay on the way out the door, over the last few days some have expressed their intention to leave the parish over this homily. To them, it seemed ideological, outdated, insensitive, inappropriate, or even hateful. I am sorry that I upset them, especially on Mother's Day. I also apologize for anything lacking in my eloquence, rhetoric, sensitivity, clarity or tone. In case anyone doesn't understand this, I do believe that God loves us all and calls us to holiness and eternal life.

Having apologized for the bad feelings provoked and any failures on my part, I must defend myself on the following points: While I did ridicule the expression, "Happy Birthing Person's Day", and I condemned the notion that the word "mother" should no longer be used, I expressed no condemnation of any person. To my best memory, I did not even use the word "sin". My intention was to argue that "mother" is a vocation worthy of the name, that it naturally applies to the woman who gives birth to her child, that there is parental ownership of the child and a child owns his or her parents, and the child has a right to be raised by them, to know them, and to love them and be loved by them. I also asserted that the child has a right to a stable loving environment, and that the teaching of our Lord on marriage is an endorsement of the inviolability of the marriage bond and the nuclear family. I also said that motherhood, for all of its natural beauty, takes tremendous skill, creativity and moral determination to do well, and that motherhood should be respected and esteemed by all, and that it should be prepared for by the socialization of girls to be good mothers. I also submitted that boys and girls should be socialized to grow up to be committed, loving husbands and wives and good parents. I also argued that gender is a social construct that has traditionally been based on the physical chromosomal and sexual anatomy of the two sexes which God created. Everything I said was closely correspondent to Catholic church teaching. (Of course, I did discuss this with several priests and lay people who have a knowledge of the Church's teaching to confirm this.) I believe that it is my job to uphold, illustrate and defend Church teaching (which I believe to flow from the teachings of Jesus Christ), including, perhaps most of all, in the Sunday homily, when the Church is gathered. Please pray that I will do this better in the future. May the Lord bring us all to the fullness of truth! Praised be Jesus Christ, now and forever!