

6th Sunday of Easter (Mother's Day Weekend).

The Sacrifice The Bridge

Once upon a time there was a young man named John who lived in a village at the base of a jagged mountain. The village was separated from the "Valley of Living Water" by a deep, terrifying canyon. There were no bridges; to get to the water, the villagers had to climb down the cliffs and back up the other side. A journey so exhausting that many simply gave up and lived in a state of constant, low-level thirst. They became "paralyzed" by the difficulty of the terrain.

One day, a traveler arrived and was shocked to see a beautiful, sturdy bridge over the canyon. It was made of deep red cedar and anchored into the solid rock. The traveler asked, "Who built this? It must have cost a fortune in gold." John smiled and shook his head. "It wasn't built with gold," he said. "It was built with a Yes, what we call a 'Fiat'."

He explained that years ago, a mother whose children were becoming weak from the trek, decided that something had to change. Every morning before the sun rose, she went to the canyon, she spent her days hauling stones. Her afternoons curing timber, and her nights planning the arches. She gave up her own rest so that her children, and eventually the whole village, would never thirst again.

"We call it Mother's Bridge," John said. "When we walk across it, we don't think about the wood or the stone. We think about the fact that her sacrifice became our path. She took the 'commandment' of love and turned it into something we could walk on."

Today, we walk across many such "bridges" built by mothers in our lives. Today we have a double celebration. We are deep in the joy of the Easter season the victory of life over death, and we pause to honor our mothers. But honestly: neither Easter nor Motherhood come easy. The joy of the Resurrection was bought with the price of the Friday Cross. Similarly, the joy of a family is often built upon the quiet, invisible, and persistent weight of a mother's sacrifice.

What is sacrifice? It is the voluntary offering of something of value, possessions, time, or life itself for a higher good. It is not merely "losing" something; it is "trading" something of value, comfort, sleep, or career goals for someone else. While a "compromise" is an agreement where two parties meet in the middle, a sacrifice is often a one-sided gift given without the requirement of a return, sacrifice IS Love. At its highest peak, we see the Cross: the ultimate act of "Love," where one person takes on a debt, they do not owe so that another may be set free.

As we sit in the pews, we recognize that for some, Mother's Day is a day of pure joy. For others, it is a day of sadness, perhaps you are grieving a mother who has passed, or perhaps the word "mother" carries the sting of absence or a sacrifice that was never given. The Gospel speaks to all of us today: because Love is not just a feeling; it is a presence that refuses to **leave us orphans**.

In our first reading, we see Philip entering Samaria. A city burdened by long-term distress, spiritual oppression, and physical paralysis. Philip brought the word of God, and the Apostles followed. The sacrifice of a missionary.

There is something "maternal" about this missionary spirit. A mother is the first missionary of the "Domestic Church." From the moment of conception through the years of upbringing, a mother is constantly caring for her children, in the caring of a sick infant, the hand on a shoulder during a teenage crisis, and the folded hands of prayer when her children are far from home. Like the Apostles in Samaria, a mother's mission is to be the vessel through which a child first senses that they **are chosen, seen, and loved.**

Jesus tells us in the Gospel, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." **What commandments?** Love God and Love Neighbor. In our modern world, we often think of love as an emotion, a feeling that comes and goes. But Jesus presents a "Theology of the Yes (Fiat)." Love is a decision of the will; it is an action. It is keeping a word. It is sacrificial.

I think "Jesus's definition" of love is a sacrifice-based commitment. We see this mirrored in motherhood. A mother's YES isn't said once; it is repeated at 3:00 AM when a child is crying, or when she puts her own dreams on pause for another. She keeps the "commandments" of love not because she is forced to, but because she remains in the heart of her family, just as Jesus remains in the Father.

St. Peter reminds us in the second reading that "it is better to suffer for doing good... than for doing evil." He points us to Christ, the righteous who suffered for the unrighteous to lead us to God. Mothers know the reality of "dying to self" physical and emotional letting go of the ego for the sake of another. This is the witness of the mother: she shows us that suffering is not a sign of defeat when it is done for the sake of love. When a mother chooses the good of her child over her own comfort, she becomes **a living icon of Christ on the Cross.** She reminds us that the most powerful thing a human can do is to lay down their life for their friends. Every mother puts their life on the line when giving birth. **True Sacrifice!**

Jesus closes our Gospel with a promise that should provide great comfort: "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." To those blessed with a mother whose love was a visible sign of God's grace: **give thanks** for that "Advocate" in your life.

But to those who feel like orphans today those whose experience of motherhood was marked by trauma, neglect, or the pain of loss, know that: The Holy Spirit, the "Spirit of Truth," is your primary Advocate. Where *human love may have failed*, God's "perfect parenthood" stands in the gap. He is the one who **"remains with you and will be in you."**

In the sacrifice of the Mass, we see the ultimate Motherhood of the Church feeding us with the Body and Blood of Christ, ensuring we are never alone. May we remain in His love, keep His word, and find our joy in the sacrifice that leads to life.