

## 'MOTHER'S DAY' - HOMILY – 14 MAY 2017 – 5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER

Today we celebrate our mothers, grandmothers, foster mothers and carers with a mothering role.

Many schools across Australia had initiatives on Friday for Mother's day this weekend.

Our parish St Joseph's School had a breakfast for the Mums.

Then at 9am Mass Year 1 and Year 5 students gathered to celebrate our Mums and Mary the mother of Jesus.

After the homily the mothers came forward for a group blessing.

The Year Ones were so excited and proud to see the Mums moving as a group to the front.

After Mass, there was a popular morning tea to continue the celebration.

This weekend we continue the prayer for our Mums.

History brings further insights to this celebration.

There is an interplay between Mothering Sunday (especially Ireland and England) and Mother's Day (USA).

### MOTHERING SUNDAY

For hundreds of years, there has been a mothering theme to the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent, Laetare Sunday in England and Ireland.

By the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, families were returning to their mother church, where they had been baptised or to their home parish.

Sometime in history, domestic servants received a holiday, a day off, to visit the mother church, often with their family.

Mothers and the local parish community were foci.

Later in 1914, Constance Penswick-Smith began the "*Mothering Sunday's Movement*".

### MOTHER'S DAY

In 1870 Julia Ward Howe in the USA was campaigning for women to take a lead in uniting for peace in the world.

She lobbied for a mother's peace day in the month of June.

In 1908 Anna Marie Jarvis in the USA commemorated her mother Anna Reeves Jarvis at a church service.

Her mother had been an activist for peace, after her experiences nursing during the American Civil War (1861-65).

Ann continued her mother's role with a passion for public health issues.

In 1914 the USA declared the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of May as Mother's Day, at a time when there was a grave concern of upcoming war.

In the 1920s, Janet Heyden from Sydney added to this tradition with her visits to the lonely mothers and others at the local hospital.

As we remember the joy and gratitude expressed today, and the family reunions,

We also note that for some mothers, it is a lonely day.

**The challenge of Mother's Day / Mothering Sunday** continues in

- Advocacy for peace
- Public Health advocacy
- Advocacy in overcoming the sin of domestic violence in society
- Poverty in many nations
- And many other issues.

The Catholic Leader this week carries a story of another initiative in public health for mothers and babies:

*“Mater Mothers’ Hospital has opened Queensland’s first, purpose built 24/7 pregnancy centre to care for women with complications from the start of pregnancy through until six weeks after birth.”*

Today’s Gospel, John 14:1-12 is for the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter.

It is popular and well-known.

As we focus on our relationships this weekend on Mother’s Day,

**we learn from John’s Gospel about the relationship in God between the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.**

Today we call it a communion of love, **communio**, Trinitarian communion, a spirituality of communion and other terms.

**From John we learn that we are called into that communion.**

One of the Old Testament revelations into God, is as **Creator**.

Another revelation – we are created in the image and likeness of God.

From Jesus we see God as a parent, **Father**. And the love of Jesus for Mary his mother.

As John’s Gospel leads us into the **mystery of communion**.

14:20 *“On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.”*

We gain insight when Jesus says of himself

14:6 ***“I am the way, and the truth, and the life.”***

Each of us finds our way, truth and meaning, and life **in Jesus**.

And of the Holy Spirit, John 14 says,

14:16 ***“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever.”***

14:17 ***“This is the Spirit of truth ... “***

As we recall those earlier **advocates** for women in solidarity for genuine peace, public health and justice on this Mother’s Day, we pray to the Holy Spirit (**the Advocate**, the Paraclete) to guide us and strengthen our resolve.

Last night at Mass we prayed for Pope Francis and his pilgrimage visit to Fatima in Portugal for the Centenary.

**We reflected on Mary as mother.**

**Invited into the love of God**, strengthened and blessed,

Let us now ask God in love to **bless our mothers**.

The mothers stand and the community prays over them.

Fr. Gerry

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – Mother’s Day –14 May 2017]

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/051417.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook14052017>]