

Motherhood: Living God's gift

May 2011



May 1: Easter 2

St Joseph the Worker | My Lord my God

May 8: Easter 3 | Mother's Day The Road to Emmaus

May 13: Our Lady of Fatima

May 15: Easter 4

May 20: St Bernadine of Siena

May 22: Easter 5

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May 29: Easter 6

May is the month of Mary and also celebrates Mother's Day. In this edition we give tribute to mothers – both heavenly and earth-bound ones.

By Marilyn Rodrigues



Motherhood: Living God's gift

I remember the time my class teacher, Mrs Gardner, had each of us write down what we wanted to be when we grew up. She pinned our responses up on the back wall. It was with great excitement that I read the others' aspirations.

It felt like looking into a crystal ball, peering at future versions of our nine-year-old selves. We were told and I didn't doubt that we could do whatever we wanted to do, and the sky was the limit!

At the time I wanted to be a teacher, and there were two of us future 'teachers' up on the wall among a motley crew including a doctor, an astronaut and a few football players.

One of the girls, Catherine, had written that she wanted to be a mother, and I couldn't understand it. Why would you pick that, I thought, when there was a whole world full of interesting jobs to choose from?

That lunchtime I wanted to know, "Don't you want to be anything special when you grow up?"

"Being a mother is special," she replied.

Now I just think how beautiful that was, and sometimes wish I had discovered the truth of it myself, if not at age nine, then at least a little sooner than I did.

Motherhood is a most precious gift as well as a call to service and a means through which God speaks in and through a woman. Motherhood is not only the gift that a mother is to her children, what she does for them in birthing and raising them, but it is God's gift to her, it is the way he changes her.



Motherhood:

“A mother is the most important person on earth. She cannot claim the honour of having built Notre Dame Cathedral. She need not.

She has built something more magnificent than any Cathedral - a dwelling for an immortal soul, the tiny perfection of her baby’s body.

The angels have not been blessed with such a grace. They cannot share in God’s creative miracle to bring new saints to heaven...what on God’s earth is more glorious than this, to be a mother?”

Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty

The change is painfully felt sometimes. There’s the pain of childbirth itself, the loss of dreams or sense of identity, the adjustment to having a totally dependent person to care for, and worry over children as they face their own challenges.

Motherhood can be a dark path at times, especially if we mothers see ourselves, our sisters or friends yearning for a child or grieving the loss of one, or struggling to look after children. At other times it is all joy. What are we to make of these ups and downs?

Mary, the Mother of God, is a great help to mothers longing to understand the meaning of motherhood and follow their path with fullness of joy and freedom from anxiety. She who pondered in her heart the events of her life along with the Word of God helps them to see their daily lived motherhood more deeply and beautifully in the context of Christ.

For me, a newly budding camelia shrub after days of rain, an offering of half-chewed toast from a grubby hand, a squabble between siblings, a sink full of hot soapy water and dirty pans – all are food for meditation on God’s word and presence and the way God that is working in my life.

Mothers are also a gift to society, contributing to the building of the kingdom of God on earth. Blessed John Paul II said that motherhood “shows a creativity on which the humanity of each human being largely depends; it also invites man to learn and to express his own fatherhood. Thus women contribute to society and to the Church their ability to nurture human beings.”



For those suffering on **Mother's Day**

Mother's day is for mothers, a day to thank our mothers for all they do or have done for us. But beyond the glossy greeting card images, it can bring painful or complicated feelings for many.

Some are grieving the loss of their mothers, others an image of the relationship with their mother they wish they had, some grieve the loss of children, or the opportunity to conceive and bring to birth a child.

Some mothers feel completely unappreciated by their children, or are unable to see them on the day for some reason. For these, the day can be salt on a wound that never fully closes.

It's good to remember to pray for them, and if appropriate, offer a small gesture to let them know they are not forgotten.

*Sources: Pope John Paul II's address at the international Women meeting December 1996, www.catholicfidelity.com
Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty, www.angeluspress.org*



Mother's Prayers.org

Motherhood is a special grace and unique challenge. For so many mothers, the helplessness of seeing their children struggle or make bad choices is a heart wrenching and longstanding grief. Separation, sickness, crime, addictions, abuse – a mother's heart feels the pain of her children as if it were her own.

When two English grandmothers, Veronica and her sister-in-law Sandra, responded to a call from the Lord to pray in a special way for their children, they did not anticipate founding a world-wide movement. Choosing consciously to trust in the Lord's words 'Ask and you will receive', they sought simply to bring the pain and worries they had for their children and grandchildren to God.

Before long, more mothers joined them and other groups formed; 'Mother's Prayers' had begun and soon spread overseas. Today, Mother's Prayers is in 90 countries worldwide.

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Prayer from *mothers prayers.org*



Lord Jesus, we come before you as mothers,
wanting you to bless our children and all
children throughout the world.

We thank you for our children - they are a
precious gift to us.

Help us, always to remember this, especially
when they are in difficulties.

Lord, they live in a troubled world - a world
that does not always acknowledge you,

- a world that may sometimes cause them to
be laughed at if they admit to belief in you.

Help them to be strong, Lord.

Help us to know that you are always with us

- sharing in the joys and in the sorrows,

joining us in the laughter and weeping with us
in the pain.

Please give us all the graces we need to fulfil
your plans for our lives

and for our duties in our families.

You are Almighty God. You can change things.

So we turn to you in faith and love knowing
that you will answer our prayers.

Lord let us always remember how much you
love us and our children

and how you urge us to come to you with our
problems.

Amen



Photo Bouquet

Give mum a bouquet of flowers that will last all year and remind her of you.

Materials:

- Cardboard in various colours
- Chenille pipe cleaners
- Photographs of children
- Glue, scissors
- Ribbon

Instructions

1. Draw or trace the petal templates onto cardboard. Decorate with markers or patterned paper if desired.
2. Position your photographs in the hole – trim off the excess and glue the photo in place onto the back piece.
3. Bend the top of pipe cleaner to make a small hook and position this as shown. Glue the flower fronts in place.
4. When you have several photo-flowers complete, arrange them into a bouquet and tie with ribbon.



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St Gerard Majella | Feastday: October 16

| Patron of expectant mothers | 1755 AD

Born at Muro, Italy, in 1726, St Gerard joined the Redemptorists as a lay brother at age 23. Displaying an extraordinary wisdom and gift for reading consciences, he was permitted to counsel communities of religious women. His patronage of expectant mothers is a result of a miracle brought about through his prayers for a woman in labour. He died at the age of twenty-nine from tuberculosis

St. Monica | Feastday: August 27 | Patron of Wives and Abuse Victims | 387 AD

Married by arrangement to a pagan official in North Africa who was violent tempered, St Monica endured years of difficulty. She had three children: Augustine, Navigius, and Perpetua. Perpetua and Navigius entered the religious life. Through her patience and prayers, her husband converted to the Catholic faith shortly before his death. St. Augustine, however, proved more difficult. After 17 years of prayers and tears, St. Augustine was baptized in 387AD. She died later that same year in the Italian town of Ostia.

Ref: www.catholic.org

Saints for Mothers



Prayer for Mothers



We thank you Lord for the great gift of motherhood.
It is within our mother's womb, that we began life.
It is in her embrace that we have known safety and comfort.
It is through her encouragement that we grow and mature.
Lord, bless our mothers.
Draw close to them and hear their prayers for their children.
Give them the grace of surrendered love -
a love that images the love of our heavenly mother, Mary.
May all mothers find daily
the strength to love generously,
the patience to endure graciously,
and the grace to live their vocation of motherhood joyously.
We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, Amen.



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Cups of Love



Your mum deserves more than breakfast in bed on Mother's Day. Try these simple recipes – all served in a tea cup!

Egg in a Cup

- Stoneware tea cups
 - 4 eggs
 - 1/4 cup milk
 - salt & pepper
 - buttered toast (if desired)
1. Combine the eggs, salt & pepper and milk in a bowl and whisk with a fork. Cook in a pan, stirring constantly until cooked.
 2. Serve in teacups with buttered toast.



Lemonade Scones with Tea

- 300ml cream
 - 2 ½ cups of self-raising flour (plain flour + X teas baking powder), sifted
 - Pinch of salt
 - ½ -1 cup lemonade
 - Milk for brushing tops
 - Decoration (optional), small heart cookie cutter.
 - Jam and whipped cream to serve
1. Preheat oven to 220C. Place baking paper on a baking tray.
 2. Place cream, flour and salt into a bowl and mix until combined. Gradually add the lemonade and mix until the dough sticks together. Turn out onto a floured board and dust with flour.
 3. Press the dough into 3 cm thick square. Using a large knife dusted with flour cut the dough into 16 cubes. Round the corners off and arrange in a grid on the baking tray.
 4. Press the cookie cutter heart into the tops of each scone, brush with milk and bake in very hot oven 10-15mins (tops will brown). Serve hot with jam, cream and tea (see below)



Fresh Mint Tea

There's nothing quite like pot of tea made with quality tea leaves. A fresh peppermint sprig steeping in a glass tea pot or tall cup looks and tastes wonderful. For regular tea drinkers, add fresh mint to green tea for a more subtle taste.

Decadent Hot Chocolate Shots

- 4 Espresso cups
 - 100 g dark chocolate, chopped.
 - 1 cup of milk
 - Flavouring (optional) eg ¼ teasp chilli, cinnamon or orange zest.
 - Whipped cream, cocoa powder to serve
1. Warm milk, chocolate & chilli/ cinnamon in a pot until just simmering. Stir regularly.
 2. Pour into cups. Top with whipped cream and dust with cocoa powder.





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