

Mother's Day Sermon - May 14, 2017

Today, people throughout the United States and many places around the world will gather to honor their mothers. Many mothers will receive flowers, breakfast in bed, dinners and other acts of affection. For those who may be away from their children, they will have to be content with a phone call or a card in the mail. But, no matter how admirable this day has become for us in today's society, honoring one's mother should not be reduced to a one day activity, because mothers provide the foundation upon which we build our lives.

God gives every created human being a mother here on earth because He loves us. And He even gives us a Heavenly Mother, the Theotokos, the Virgin Mary, who will always love us and protect us and keep us under the shelter of her wings, even after our earthly mothers and grandmothers have passed on.

Mothers are always giving and self-sacrificing for their children. It begins with the pain of childbirth. And it never ends from there. Our mothers will always worry for us and care for us. When we suffer, they will suffer. When we are ill, they will become ill with pain and suffering and wish that they could take away our illness or suffering and suffer for us instead. How many mothers there are who go without so that their children may have, whether it be food, or clothing, or other earthly amenities? Your mother will take a bullet for you, or catch a hand grenade thrown at you, or step in front of a train for you. Who else would pray that God would take her instead of her child but a mother?

Proverbs 6:20-23 advises us in this way: "My child, keep your father's command and do not forsake your mother's teaching. Bind them always on your heart; fasten them around your neck. When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep; they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light and correction and instruction are the way to life." As an adult, a man learns how to love his wife and children through the way he loves his mother and the way his mother loves him. A woman learns from the sacrifices of her mother. No one can teach decency, character and dignity but a mother. As children, our bodies are nourished through our mother's milk and as we grow, our souls are nourished in the same way through the kindness, compassion and generosity she feeds us.

Today we need mothers who are women of faith, who will be a shining example to their children and teach their children to love God. The seeds implanted in our hearts, minds and souls by our mothers will either produce virtues or thorns, depending upon what our mother teaches us and what kind of example she sets for us. We need mothers who will take their children to church from babyhood, and who will pray with their children at home. A virtuous mother is so needed to instill in her children the faith we received from the saints. How many of us who love God and love church were taken from an early age by the hand of our mother who instilled this love and devotion into us by taking us and by setting the example? In Proverbs 9:1, women of faith are considered to be "pillars of support" and "faithful". This experience will leave a longstanding impression on the child that will result in a lifetime of lessons as a son or daughter, a young man or woman, a husband or wife, a father or mother, a grandfather or grandmother and in all the paths and professions of life that we may experience.

On this Mother's Day, we salute all mothers, grandmothers, godmothers and even single women who set examples for nieces or nephews. For those who are in heaven, we ask for their

intercession. For those still on earth, we pray that God gives them a long and healthy life. If your mother has blessed you much, thank her. And if your mother has failed you, the best Mother's Day gift you can give is to forgive her.