



...from God with Love ...

¹Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. ²Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) ³That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. (Eph 6:1-3)

"What's past is prologue" according to William Shakespeare from his play *The Tempest*. The phrase was originally used in *The Tempest*, Act 2, Scene I. Well, if the past is prologue, then it is parent to the present, and this proves true in the case of parents – fathers and mothers. None of us would be reading this if we did not have parents and, especially, mothers. Throughout history, mothers have had a greater influence on the character, manners, respect, and religious life of the man or woman than any other. Each of us has lessons learned from our mothers hidden away in our memory banks which surface when the need arises – either consciously, or subconsciously. I am no exception to that rule though I would have become a better man if I had heeded my mother's advice earlier and more conscientiously.

I am thankful to God that I had something growing up that many children in America do not have – a two-parent home in which I, and my siblings, were dearly and sacrificially loved. My father was calm and devoted, and my mother was temperamental and sentimental. Though I owe much of my early religious education to my father, it was my mother who demonstrated her love in so many ways daily as she went about her duties as house-keeper and parent. She taught me about Christian faith by her life. She loved to garden, and she loved to travel and see the mountains and wild flowers. Above all, she loved to sing. She was no professional vocalist, but she knew more hymns and Irish folk songs than I can remember. Sometimes in surprising moments of pleasure, I will recall a line from one of those songs she used to sing merrily about the house: *"Pass Me Not O Gentle Savior;" "I Come to the Garden Alone;" "Jesus Keep me Near the Cross;" "Amazing Grace;"* and on and on. I also recalled just this morning some of her favorite Irish selections: *"O Danny Boy;" "My Wild Irish Rose;" "I'll Take you Home Again Kathleen;" "I wandered Today by the Mill, Maggie;"* and of the *"Mountains of the Mourne Sweeping down to the Sea."* I suppose that my own love of the older classics, and dislike of most all forms of modern music, were inherited from my mother's singing.

Music is just one example of how my mother, and perhaps YOUR mother, has influenced our attitudes and even character. In my early days of military service, we were reminded that *"If God wanted us to have a girl friend; He would have issued us one!"* But that did not hold true for mothers. Her position is sacrosanct to each of us – even when facing an enemy on the battlefield.

The human baby is different from every other creature known to man. Colts, lambs, chicks, etc. are immediately able, at birth, to get upon their feet and walk, but not so with the baby boy or girl. The human baby is born, not only helpless, but bearing grief and trouble for its caretaker – the mother. It knows no concept of love – only greed. If it realizes a want (in the midst of its being fondled, bathed, dressed, etc), it has no patience to wait. It proclaims its dissatisfaction with wails and screams that will awaken a neighborhood. It cannot lift a finger to help itself, and demands immediate gratification for its every desire.

Where can we find a devoted creature to care for such an unlovely creature? Who will rush to change the dirty and putrid diapers of a screaming little brat? Who will run to its side at every peep? Who will go without meals and sleep in order to care for such a creature? Where will we find a caretaker that will love the child without limits, and never receive a token of love in response? The salary of such a one would be astronomical! But, as often is the case in the nature of our God, there is an exception of grace – mothers. Her love is not unlike the love of God. He first loved us so that we may love Him. He loves with an unconditional love, and so do mothers.

A mother does not fret and worry over a screaming baby believing that she will be rewarded with some great fortune in future years. She does so as an investment of love. Even if the child never returns the mother's love – God forbid – she will nonetheless love the child as long as her heart continues to beat.

My mother passed away many years ago (on, of all things, Mother's Day). For several years after, I would often have the urge to pick up the phone and call my mother, but then realize: "That is no longer possible." But perhaps some who read this devotion still have mother's that are alive in this life. If so, why not call often enough today that you will have no regrets tomorrow?

Pray often for mothers (and fathers, too) everywhere. It is the mother and father that are the nucleus of the city, state, and nation; and more importantly, the Church itself. By raising God-fearing children, they (and especially mothers) are building the kingdom of Heaven: *Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.* (Mark 10:14-15)

HAPPY MOTHERS DAY and God bless mothers everywhere!