

WORDS FROM THE CROSS

Day 3: The Beauty of Family

"Woman, behold your son. Behold your mother."

As Mary stood at the foot of the cross, she experienced profound sorrow and anguish, witnessing the agonizing crucifixion of her beloved son. She must have realized that Simeon's prophecy, spoken years earlier at the presentation of Jesus in the temple, had been fulfilled at that very moment. Every blow of the hammer, every cry of pain, every shout of mockery, and every drop of blood shed pierced her soul as a sword, provoking indescribable pain.

Likewise, amid His excruciating suffering on the cross, Jesus demonstrates profound care and compassion for those he loves. Addressing his mother, Mary, and his beloved disciple John, Jesus says, "Woman, behold your son... Behold your mother." (John 19:26-27)

This phrase is plain and short, but each word adds to the overall meaning of Jesus' declaration. Addressing His mother as "woman" is not a derogatory treatment; rather, it echoes back to Eve, the first woman and the mother of humankind, casting Mary as a new "Eve." It is a title of respect in the Ancient Near East, but English does not have a rendering that would avoid the abrupt sound of the address.

Mary is now the focus and prime object of Jesus' words. The full attention of the crucifixion witnesses is now directed to Mary. In one of his final acts from the cross, Jesus demonstrates His deep concern for the well-being of those he loves and his desire for them to be cared for in his absence.

In entrusting Mary to John's care and John to Mary's care, Jesus establishes a new familial relationship that transcends biological ties. He creates a bond of spiritual kinship rooted in love and mutual support. This act underscores the significance of the Christian community and the interconnectedness of believers in the family of God. Jesus' words challenge us to broaden our understanding of family. In the family of God, we are called to love and support one another as brothers and sisters, regardless of our biological relationships. We are called to extend hospitality and welcome to all who seek refuge and belonging, creating a community of inclusivity and acceptance.

