

Father O'Connor's Homily for 8 May 2022  
Fourth Sunday of Easter-C  
Mother's Day  
Good Shepherd Sunday  
World Day of Prayer for Vocations

Acts of the Apostles 13: 14, 43-52  
Revelation 7: 9, 14b-17  
John 10: 27-30

A young sailor on a military ship heard the order to clear the deck. Just then, his jacket blew overboard. He went running to rescue that jacket and was ordered, "Stop where you are!" But he continued, dove into the water and retrieved his jacket.

Later he was called before his commanding officer who said to him, "You disobeyed a direct order. Explain yourself." The young sailor reached into the inside left pocket of his jacket and pulled out a picture of his mother. He handed it to the officer, and then said rather sheepishly, "I always keep that picture of my mother close to my heart."

The officer looked at the picture, and then smiled at the sailor and said, "Anyone who would risk his own life for a picture of his mother would certainly be willing to give his life for his country. Case dismissed!"

We all have pictures of our mothers in our hearts. On this Mother's Day we take the opportunity to take a good look at those memories. And whether our mothers are living or deceased, we take time today to give thanks.

Our mothers personally attended to our physical needs. They carried us for nine months and then gave us birth. They nourished us and cared for us. They educated us and formed us. Many things and opportunities our mothers did without so that we could have things and opportunities to enjoy. And we are grateful.

But as wonderful as those material gifts are, even higher are the spiritual gifts that they brought to us. Our mothers, along with our fathers, introduced us to God. They taught us how to make the sign of the cross, how to pray. They showed us by their own example reverence for God and attentiveness to God's will. Our mothers put us on the path of virtue, teaching us when we were very young to be kind and obedient, to be truthful and unselfish, to be pure and respectful.

Our mothers taught us to be disciples of Jesus, and in so many ways they showed us the face of the Lord. And we are grateful.

What does this Sunday's Gospel have to do with Mother's Day?

This Fourth Sunday of Easter is known as Good Shepherd Sunday, because of today's Gospel. It is also World Day of Prayer for Vocations. A vocation is a calling from God: whether to single life, married life, consecrated religious life, or the ordained life. We have all received a calling or are discerning our calling. Our Good Shepherd leads us and guides us along the way. And today we remember and celebrate that graced vocation of motherhood.

What would our mothers encourage us to do with today's Gospel about the Good Shepherd? What would our Blessed Mother Mary encourage us to do? I think that Mary would say, and I think our mothers would agree, "Remember that Jesus is always with you. Listen to Him. And do not be afraid to do whatever He tells you."

Today we remember our Good Shepherd's call to motherhood – and we remember our mothers for answering His call. And we are grateful... eternally grateful.