

5<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER B 2009  
MOTHER'S DAY  
I am the true vine, you are the branches

I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK THAT

THIS IS A GOOD TEXT FOR MOTHER'S DAY.

**WE ARE CONNECTED TO CHRIST**

**IN THE SAME WAY A MOTHER IS CONNECTED TO HER CHILDREN.**

I BELIEVE THAT MOST MOTHERS WOULD SACRIFICE THEIR LIVES

FOR THEIR CHILDREN IN A HEARTBEAT.

AN ANONYMOUS AUTHOR DESCRIBES FEELINGS

THAT MOST MOTHERS WILL RELATE TO.

HER WORDS SAY IT BETTER THAN I COULD

LET ME READ THEM TO YOU.

We are sitting at lunch when my daughter casually mentions that she and her husband are thinking of "starting a family". We are taking survey, she says, half-joking. "Do you think I should have a baby?"

"It will change your life," I say, carefully keeping my tone neutral. "I know," she says, "no more sleeping in on weekends, no more spontaneous vacations" But, I am thinking, that is not what I meant at all. I look at my daughter trying to decide what to tell her. I want her to know what she will never learn in childbirth classes. I want to tell her that the physical wounds of childbearing will heal, but that becoming a mother will leave her with an emotional wound so raw that she will forever be vulnerable.

I consider warning her that she will never again read a newspaper without asking "what if that had been MY child". That every plane crash, every house fire will haunt her. That when she sees pictures of starving children, she will wonder if anything could be worse than watching your child die..

I look at her carefully manicured nails and stylish suit and think that no matter how sophisticated she is, becoming a mother will reduce her to the primitive level of a bear protecting her cub.

I feel I should warn her that no matter how many years she has invested in her career, she will be professionally derailed by motherhood. She might arrange for child care, but one day she will be going into an important business meeting and she will think of her baby's sweet smell. She will have to use every ounce of her discipline to keep from running home, just to make sure her baby is all right.

I want my daughter to know that everyday decisions will no longer be routine. That a five year old boy's desire to go to the men's room rather than the women's at McDonald's will become a major dilemma.

That right there, in the midst of clattering trays and screaming children, issues of independence and gender identity will be weighed against the prospect that a child molester may be lurking in that restroom. However decisive she may be at the office, she will second-guess herself constantly as a mother.

Looking at my attractive daughter, I want to assure her that eventually she will shed the pounds of pregnancy, but she will never feel the same about herself. That her life, now so important, will be of less value to her once she has a child. That she would give it up in a moment to save her offspring, but will also begin to hope for more years – not to accomplish her own dreams, but to watch her child accomplish theirs.

My daughter's relationship with her husband will change, but not in the way she thinks. I wish she could understand how much more you can love a man who is careful to powder the baby or who never hesitates to play with his child. I think she should know that she will fall in love with him again for reasons she would now find very unromantic.

I wish my daughter could sense the bond she will feel with women throughout history who have tried to stoop war, prejudice and drunk driving. I want to capture for her the belly laugh of a baby who is touching the soft fur of a dog or a cat for the first time. I want her to taste the joy that is so real it actually hurts.

My daughter's quizzical look makes me realize that tears have formed in my eyes.  
 "You will never regret it, "I finally say.

Then I reach across the table, squeeze my daughter's hand and offer a silent prayer for her, and for me, and for all of the mere mortal women who stumble their way into this most wonderful of callings. This blessed gift from God....that of being a mother.

THAT ABOUT SAYS IT ALL DOESN'T IT.

WHEN YOU ARE A MOTHER YOU ARE FOREVER CONNECTED  
 TO YOUR OFFSPRING.

AND TODAY WE LEARN THAT WE ARE CONNECTED TO CHRIST

LIKE A MOTHER IS CONNECTED TO HER CHILD

OR IN THE WORDS OF THE GOSPEL

HE IS THE VINE AND WE ARE THE BRANCHES.

THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE WE NEED TO SEE, HOWEVER.

**GOD DISCIPLINES GOD'S CHILDREN**

**LIKE A LOVING MOTHER DISCIPLINES HER CHILDREN.**

HE CUTS OFF EVERY BRANCH IN ME THAT BEARS NO FRUIT.

WHILE EVERY BRANCH THAT DOES BEAR FRUIT

HE PRUNES

SO THAT IT WILL BE EVEN MORE FRUITFUL.

THIS IS A DIFFICULT TEXT.

YOU CAN READ IT AS A MESSAGE OF JUDGMENT

OR YOU CAN READ IT AS A MESSAGE OF LOVE,

TOUGH LOVE.

ONE AUTHOR IN HIS BOOK

HAS AN INTERESTING PASSAGE ON MOTHER GIRAFFES

THAT MIGHT HELP US.

HE SAYS THAT THE FIRST THING TO EMERGE AT A BABY GIRAFFE'S BIRTH

IS ITS FRONT HOOVES AND HEAD.

MINUTES LATER, THE NEWBORN IS HURLED FROM ITS MOTHER'S BODY,

FALLS TEN FEET,

AND LANDS ON ITS BACK.

WITHIN SECONDS, IT ROLLS TO AN UPRIGHT POSITION

WITH IT LEGS TUCKED UNDER ITS BODY.

FROM THIS POSITION, IT VIEWS THE WORLD FOR THE FIRST TIME

AND SHAKES OFF ANY REMAINING BIRTHING FLUID.

THE MOTHER GIRAFFE LOWERS HER HEAD JUST LONG ENOUGH

TO TAKE A QUICK LOOK AT HER CALF

AND THEN SHE DOES

WHAT SEEMS TO BE A VERY UNREASONABLE THING:

SHE KICK HER BABY,

SENDING IT SPRAWLING HEAD OVER HEELS.

IF IT DOES NOT GET UP

SHE KICKS IT AGAIN AND AGAIN

UNTIL THE CALF FINALLY STANDS ON ITS WOBBLY LEGS.

AND THEN WHAT DOES THE MOTHER GIRAFFE DO?

SHE KICKS IT OFF ITS FEET!

WHY?  
SHE WANTS IT TO REMEMBER HOW IT GOT UP.  
IN THE WILD,  
BABY GIRAFFES MUST BE ABLE TO GET UP  
AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE  
TO STAY WITH THE HERD  
AND AVOID BECOMING A MEAL  
FOR SOME ANIMAL OF PREY.  
THE BEST WAY A MOTHER GIRAFFE  
HAS TO INSURE THAT HER CALF LIVES  
IS FOR HER TO TEACH IT TO  
GET UP QUICKLY AND GET WITH IT..  
THE AUTHOR'S POINT IS THAT  
THE MOTHER GIRAFFE IS ENGAGED IN TOUGH LOVE.  
THERE ARE CERTAIN DEMANDS THAT EVERY PARENT MUST MAKE  
FOR THE WELFARE OF HIS OR HER CHILD.  
THERE ARE CERTAIN RULES THAT MUST BE ENFORCED.  
NO LOVING PARENT IS GOING TO ACCORD A CHILD ABSOLUTE FREEDOM.  
SUCH FREEDOM COULD BE DEADLY.  
EVERY PARENT HAS TO SAY "NO" MORE THAN THEY WOULD LIKE.  
IT IS NOT EASY.  
SOMETIMES IT REALLY DOES HURT THE PARENT MORE  
THAN IT DOES THE CHILD.

BUT LOVE NEEDS TO SAY “NO”.

NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE HAD A COVER STORY SOMETIME BACK

ON THE EFFECTS OF OVERLY PERMISSIVE PARENTING.

FOR EXAMPLE, THEY CITED A SURVEY THAT SHOWED THAT

CHILDREN EXPECT TO ASK THEIR PARENTS NINE TIMES

FOR SOMETHING NEW

BEFORE THE PARENTS GIVE IN.

AND SAD TO SAY,

THESE PARENTS EVENTUALLY GIVE IN.

THERE COMES A TIME WHEN CHILDREN MUST ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY

FOR THEIR OWN ACTIONS.

A TERM HAS CREPT INTO OUR VOCABULARY,

“HELICOPTER PARENTS”

- PARENTS WHO HOVER OVER THEIR CHILDREN

AND NEVER ALLOW THEM

TO LEARN THAT ACTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES.

I KNOW THAT YOU KNOW THAT WE LIVE IN A LAWFUL UNIVERSE.

YOU DRIVE YOUR CAR THROUGH A STOP SIGN

AND YOU MAY BE HIT.

GOD LOVES YOU,

BUT ACTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES.

THERE IS MORAL LAW IN THIS UNIVERSE AS WELL.

YOU LIVE A LIFE OF DECEIT AND WRONGDOING  
AND SOONER OR LATER IT WILL CATCH UP WITH YOU.  
IT IS A LESSON WE NEVER SEEM TO LEARN.  
GOD WILL FORGIVE YOU FOR YOUR SIN,  
BUT GOD DOES NOT CANCEL THE RULE OF CONSEQUENCES.  
GALATIANS 6, VERSE 7 SAYS IT WELL.  
DO NOT BE DECEIVED,  
GOD CANNOT BE MOCKED.  
A PERSON REAPS WHAT THEY SOW.  
YES THESE ARE HARSH WORDS,  
BUT EVEN SECULAR CULTURE HAS A PHRASE FOR IT,  
YOU PLAY,  
YOU PAY.  
MY GUESS IS THAT GOD DESIGNED A WORLD OF CONSEQUENCES  
TO HELP US GROW UP AND TO MATURE.  
WHATEVER THE REASON,  
YOU CAN BE SURE THAT GOD'S MOTIVE WAS LOVE,  
THE SAME LOVE THAT MOTIVATES THE GOOD PARENT.  
BUT HERE IS THE GOOD NEWS FOR THE DAY:  
EVEN OUR WORSE ACTIONS CANNOT DESTROY THE LOVE  
GOD HAS FOR US.  
THAT IS WHAT THE CROSS IS ALL ABOUT.

WE COULD TAKE HIS SON AND NAIL HIM TO A TREE

AND GOD WILL STILL LOVE US.

THAT IS THE MEANING OF GRACE.

THE BOND BETWEEN OURSELVES AND CHRIST CAN NEVER BE BROKEN.

ONE COUNSELOR SAYS THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION

ON A TEENAGER'S MIND IS THIS:

DO YOU LOVE ME?

THROUGH ALL KINDS OF WAYS AND BEHAVIOR

THE TEEN IS ASKING

“AM I LOVEABLE”?

AM I WORTHY OF BEING LOVED.

AM I OK.?

JESUS SAYS THAT YOU NEVER HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT QUESTION

WITH GOD.

YOU ARE LOVED.

YES, SOMETIMES WE ARE NOT OK

BUT WE ARE STILL LOVED.

MOTHER'S DAY IS A REMINDER OF THAT TRUTH FOR ME.

SO INDEED – HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY..

