

6th Sunday of Easter

My mother lived to be 95 years old before she died in 2015. When I was a kid, she was a typical stay-at-home Mom—shopping, cooking and cleaning—until she got a part-time job to provide some extra income for our family. Dad had stable work, but Mom decided to help outside the home too. I realize more and more every year how much I took them both for granted. Mom made our education a priority, and she healed our scrapes and bruises. When we got injured playing in the backyard or riding our bikes, we expected her to fix us, and she did. Her awesome deeds convinced us she had a wide range of wisdom, so we listened when she promoted religious education and prepared us for the sacraments.

The service of mothers resonates with the service of the apostle Philip in today's first reading. He was filled with the wisdom of the gospel and tended the education of his people. He also healed the sick from a variety of maladies. All of this gave him a platform from which people would listen to him. They learned, believed, and even received the Holy Spirit by handlaying after their baptism.

Psalm 66 serves as our responsorial today because we see similar properties in the actions of God himself. God worked awesome deeds to heal the ills of his people. Recalling the Exodus from Egypt, our cantor sang of God and the Israelites, "He turned the sea into dry land; they passed through the river on foot.... he rules forever by his might." Then, applying this historical event to one's personal experience, the psalm concludes, "I will tell what [God] did for my soul. Blest be God, who did not reject my prayer, nor withhold from me his merciful love." God rescued his people from all that ailed them. He brought them salvation through water, foreshadowing the mystery of baptism. People therefore listened to his words and obeyed his rule. As we celebrate Mothers' Day today, we give thanks for the gifts God provides like a loving parent, and for the incomparable love and service that faithful mothers give their kids.

The example of mothers, as the example of Philip and of God himself, inspires us all to develop virtues for the sake of those who cannot care completely for themselves. Those attributes come to us naturally on behalf of our children, and they help us care for the children of others.

Our country struggles to deal appropriately with immigrants, including families with children seeking asylum. This difficult, polarizing conversation seeks a virtuous path. The bishops of the United States have written, "in this encounter with the immigrant, the migrant, and the refugee in our midst, we encounter Christ." Our laws aim to be fair, protecting and charitable. America has achieved some of the successes that the apostle Philip reached: We share wisdom, we provide specialized education, we heal the sick; these abilities have attracted others who would like to experience the merciful love of God, who has blessed our motherland and who "rules forever by his might."

Like a good mother, God loved our ancestors, gave them safe escort, and provided a home where he could protect them. Today's psalm will guide our feet toward wisdom and healing, so that all may pray in unison, "Blest be God, who did not reject my prayer, nor withhold from me his merciful love."

Sunday, May 14, 2023