

May. Hints of summer, lilacs blooming, new growth unfolding from the ends of branches, every lawn green and vibrant, dandelions offering bursts of yellow, May. And on this second Sunday when the world outside is a grand bouquet of color, our land pauses a moment to honor mothers. A better time could not be chosen. Gifts and meals and families gathered this is the day when moms are in their glory. But this is not the only day that moms are in their glory during the month of May. Watch the mothers next week at confirmation. You will see how proud they are of their sons or daughters. When graduation falls in May there is another moment added to the month when mother's glow with pride. Whether it be high school or college or even a ceremony at a nursery school whenever a child achieves, whenever a child is honored, a mother is in her glory.

But today as our gospel reading speaks of glory there is a hint that the most glorious moments for mothers may not be what happens on Mother's Day or at confirmation or graduation. For God does not see things the way we do. Let's listen to Jesus' words.

Now the Son of man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once.

What has happened to cause Jesus to speak about being glorified? Have angels filled the sky with light and song, glorifying God as they did at Jesus' birth? Have those who witnessed Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead shouted praises to God for Jesus, glorifying him? Have the crowds that followed Jesus and saw his healing and heard his teaching poured out their praises to heaven and all the earth? No. Our gospel begins with the words: When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified." Who had gone out? Judas, the one who had gone to gather the soldiers for Jesus' arrest. Once Judas went out all the events of that evening and the following morning were set in motion. The arrest in the garden of Gethsemane, the trial before the Sandhedrin, the trial before Pilate, the mocking and whipping and crucifying – all set in motion. And Jesus said, Now the Son of Man has been glorified.

Think of a mother. Think of all that God has witnessed in her raising her children. All the moments in public – seen by God. Embarrassing moments when a child throws a tantrum, proud moments when a teacher speaks about what a fine child you have. And all the moments seen by no one but by the mother and her child and by God. Moments when a mother is groggy with sleep and comforts a child after a nightmare. Moments when she has lost her temper and shouted in anger. And all the times when she has simply done her duty, preparing food, washing clothes, cleaning the house, driving here and there. What glory does God treasure in a mother? Everything that comes from love. Love is a mother's glory. Not the achievements of a child but the love that a mother gives.

God is glorified in God's loving. Jesus went to the cross for me and for you. Love sent him there. It is not how much he suffered that is his glory – not how wisely he taught – nor how powerfully he healed, but love. Jesus was glorified, God was glorified in Jesus offering himself in love.

And Jesus wants the same for us. "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Some folks live in big houses, some folks live in little houses. I don't think God is much impressed by our houses whether big or small. But where there is love in a home there is glory, the only glory God values.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote that it is only when my brother is a burden to me, that he truly becomes my brother. He was talking about love. Jesus himself is glorified in taking the burden of my sin and the burden of your sin upon himself. The same is true of his disciples.

It is no trick to love the child who gets straight A's and scores the winning goal. No trick to love the mother who is always sweet and kind and who blessed you in every way. It is no trick to love the fellow church member whose words are always gracious and who always does his fair share. But Jesus love is loving the undeserving, dying for sinners. Love one another as I have loved you, he says.

As I have loved you.

Jesus love for you is the model. Jesus love for you is the source. Jesus love for you is the beginning.

You and I cannot do too much thinking about Jesus. You and I cannot spend too much time realizing how he has loved us when we did not deserve his love. You and I cannot spend too much time wondering how the Son of God would offer himself for someone like me, like you.

As you realize how loved you are by Jesus you will always have his love to share, loving as he has loved you.