

3 EASTER (MOTHER'S DAY) MAY 8, 2011 CYCLE "A"

**TITLE: OUR GOD, LIKE MOM, WILL NOT LEAVE US
COMFORTLESS.**

**READINGS: Acts 2:14a,36-41, Ps. 116:1-4,12-19, 1Pet. 1:17-23,
Luke 24:13-35**

Happy Mother's Day to all mothers in our congregation, all our mothers who are not able to be with us today and remembering at the same time those who loved us nurtured us and have gone to God. Did you know you could address God as Mother as well as Father? Actually a lot of husbands may think that would be more appropriate since God is in charge anyway. There is a "mother side of God." It is the compassionate loving, forgiving side. It is the comforting, empathetic side. It is that side of God that all of us have experienced in the arms of our own mothers where we found love, security and comfort.

Just as we are comforted by the mere presence of our mothers, we are also comforted by the presence of God. There are so very many places in Scripture which refer to God's comforting his people with his presence. One you know well is Psalm 23:4 "For you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me." And in Psalm 119:50 it says, "This is my comfort in my distress that your promise gives me life." In so many places in Isaiah we hear him speak of the comfort of God's presence. In Isaiah 40:1 he says, "Comfort, O comfort my people...speak tenderly to Jerusalem." God is certainly like a father, but God is also like a mother who comforts her children. Listen again to Isaiah: "As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem." Isa.66:13. It is mother God who gives comfort. because it is by God's mere presence that we are comforted. Just like little Emily Violet who was baptized today. She is most comforted when she is in the loving arms of her mother or the strong comforting arms of her father. She knows she is loved and protected. And now after her baptism she will know the love and comfort of her God as well.

There is a country Western song entitled, "Roses for Mama." In the song, it is Mothers Day, and a man goes to a florist shop to buy his mother a bouquet. He knows he should visit his mother, but he has more important things to do, so he decides to send her flowers instead. At the florist shop, the man encounters a little boy who wants to buy some roses for his mother but he doesn't have enough

money. The man gives the boy some money, he then buys his mother's bouquet. When the man drives away from the flower shop, he happens to pass by the cemetery. Glancing into the cemetery, he sees the little boy kneeling on a grave, a bouquet of roses in his hand. The man pulls into the cemetery and asks the boy what he is doing. The boy explains that his mother has been dead a year, and that he comes there all the time to talk to her, and on this special day, to give his mom flowers. The man turns around and drives back to the florist. He then asks the florist if his own mother's flowers have been delivered yet. When the florist tells him no, the man cancels that delivery, and he now makes the delivery himself.

There is nothing that says, "I love you" like being there. Children need parents who are there for them. Mothers and fathers need children to be there. Aging parents need children who come to see them and love them. The risen Jesus in today's Gospel lesson joins the disciples on the road to Emmaus accepts, their invitation to stay with them bringing love and comfort by his presence, and all the while opening the Scriptures to them and finally breaking bread with them and sharing his life with them in the meal. Where was it that these two disciples found comfort, where did they find Jesus? He is revealed to them through the Scriptures and in the breaking of the bread. That is where Jesus shares himself intimately, completely. This, too, is where we find our God, our "Mother God" who with her presence comforts us in love, security and peace.

"I will not leave you comfortless," said Jesus. "I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live." Jn.14:19. Because Jesus, like a loving mother, is with us, we can cope, we can endure, we can conquer. If our mother is there it is wonderful. If our mother understands it is even better. But best of all is the mother who prepares us to cope with life and gives us the tools to succeed.

In 1942 there was a relocation of some 110,000 Japanese Americans to internment camps, because of World War II. In one of these camps, Carole Doi, a third generation Japanese American, was born. Years later, Carole married a man who had also spent time in the camps. When she delivered their baby daughter, they noticed that the child's feet turned inward, the toes facing each other. Carole was determined to do whatever it would take to help her daughter walk normally. For four years she worked with the child providing corrective shoes and by the age of six, her daughter was walking normally, but Carole wasn't satisfied. "I wanted her to do anything in which she would use her legs," she said. The girl chose ice skating.

Carole's daughter was a natural on the ice. Before long, the youngster was bugging her mother for more rink time. She'd refuse to leave the ice until she got a particular move right. Soon Carole was rising at 4 a.m. to get her daughter to the rink. Finally, after 15 years of lessons, young Kristi Yamaguchi represented her country in the Olympics. As the U.S. flag was hoisted during the 1992 medals ceremony, Carole and Jim Yamaguchi watched Kristi receive the gold medal. Kristi Yamaguchi stood on that victory platform because of a mother who stood behind her loved her and helped her conquer.

We honor our mothers today and wish them a happy mother's day for they are most beautiful when they image to us the "mother side" of God. At the same time we honor our God who is like a loving mother who is ever present, ever empathizing and ever giving us the strength to overcome. "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you," said Jesus, "...because I live, you also shall live." Our God is like a mother slowly helping her daughter walk with straight feet. Because God lives, we can live! We see and know the "mother side" of God when we see and know it in our own mothers. **Amen.**

Pastor Barney