



Ascension of the Lord May 12, 2013 C

Happy Mother's Day!

Mothers, we salute you and thank you on this, your special day. May you feel blessed for the way you co-created new life with our divine Creator. We thank you for carrying us in your body for nine months, sometimes suffering much in the process. In one of the Easter Season readings, Paul reminds us: "You must undergo many hardships." Mothers, in the course of your life, you have undergone many hardships in your role as mother. If at the end of the day you may not feel appreciated, know that God who sees all things appreciate the way you model his self-giving love to the world.

If at times you feel you have failed in your role as mother, you must forgive yourself because that is what God and Mary, our Mother, would want you to do. Carrying guilt around is soul-destroying. Say you are sorry to God and to your children and begin anew. If you have a poor relationship with your children or with your own mother, follow the wise advice of the serenity prayer:

*Change what can be changed
Accept what can't be changed
Pray for the wisdom to know the difference.*

Always remember, we are all in process. God is not finished with us yet. So here below we will often mess up and fail others and ourselves. Say a genuine "sorry" and go on, praying for the grace to do better.

What a mom . . .

This reflection and the next one is by Jay Cormier.

Brooke had been married for only a year when her life suddenly became a nightmare. The FBI burst into their house at 6 A.M. and arrested Brooke and her husband on charges of fraud and conspiracy. Brooke would soon learn that her husband had used her identity to embezzle tens of thousands of dollars from his workplace. She had no idea.

In an instant, she lost her home and her marriage.

The federal charges were held against her for 90 days. So Brooke went home to her Mom and Dad's. For 90 nights, she slept on their couch—and for those 90 nights, Brooke's mom slept on the love seat, across from the couch. Brooke did not ask her mom to sleep there. She just did.

*Brooke writes about the horrible experience and how her mother helped her through it in an essay in **The New York Times** (April 11, 2011).*

Brooke's mom quietly shared every sleepless night, every meal that went uneaten, every moment of anger and grief and despair, with her daughter.

"Are you OK?" Mom would whisper during those long nights.

"Are you OK?" Brooke would whisper back.

"It was our code," Brooke writes. "There was no real answer, but asking the question was enough.

"To know that someone loved me so much, was willing to feel my pain so intensely . . . made me feel encased in a bubble of protection. I began to wonder if sadness was this finite thing, a big black mass of which there was only so much in the world. If so, my mother was sharing it with me so that I did not have to bear the full weight. The more she took, the more she was unable to eat and sleep, and the faster her heart raced, the less [pain] there was for me."

Later, when the charges against her were dropped and she began to rebuild her life, Brooke shared the whole ugly story with her doctor.

"How have you survived this?" the doctor asked.

Brooke thought for a second. "While the charges were held against me, I slept on the couch in my parents' house. I spent 90 nights on that couch." Brooke paused. "And my mom? She slept for 90 nights on the love seat."

The doctor blinked, unable to hold back her tears. "What a mom," she said softly, "what a mom."

A mother's spirit

Early that Saturday morning, Ashley Smith was returning home to her Atlanta apartment after a quick run to the store. As she got out of her car, she felt a gun in her side. Brian Nichols, the fugitive who had killed the presiding judge, court reporter and a deputy at an Atlanta courthouse, forced Ashley into her apartment and held her bound in her bathroom.

It was the beginning of an extraordinary ordeal for the young widow, the mother of a five-year-old daughter. But, displaying extraordinary courage and levelheadedness, Ashley acted as her faith taught her: over the next several hours, she spoke to him as one hurting soul to another. She spoke gently but firmly to Nichols. As they talked about God, family, pancakes and the massive manhunt going on outside, Ashley the hostage, became Ashley the confidant; the longer they talked, more of the fear dissipated.

Nichols soon untied Ashley. He said at one point, "I feel like I'm already dead," but Ashley urged him to consider the fact that he was still alive a "miracle."

After Nichols gave himself up peacefully, Ashley said that she tried not to judge him but to let him take from her sense of hope. She said that she had several opportunities to pick up the gun, "but I did not want him or anybody else dead."

"I wanted his mother to be able to look at me and say, Thank you for making my son understand that nobody else needed to die, not even him."

The following is a prayer that any woman will appreciate even if she has never given birth to a child. If you like it, share it with other women.

Motherhood and the Chalice

A good mother's life is like a chalice. It is a precious vessel dedicated in the deepest sense to the service of God. Sometimes, as with the chalice, its depths are glowing with the wine of joy. And sometimes it feels the tiny splash of a few drops of water that fall into it like tears. Like a chalice, too, sometimes it is lifted up and sometimes brought low. But always it is sanctified by the Presence, undoubted, though unseen, of Our Blessed Savior.

Because a good Mother's sacrifice can be repaid only by the Sacrifice of the Mass, I send this Mass to you.

Have a very blessed Mother's Day,

Le Sarah

A Prayer for Today's Woman

Show me the inherent goodness and beauty of my womanhood and teach me to rejoice in all its aspects.

Let me see the dignity of my sex so that I shall never permit anyone to abuse, debase or ridicule it.

Show me the wonder of my role as a life-bearer which is not limited to my biological function as a mother but extends to other aspects and situations of my presence in the world; let me recognize my power to nurture, comfort, inspire and guide others as part of the creation process of my life.

Fill me with the desire to build up rather than tear down, to heal rather than to wound, to reconcile rather than polarize, to risk rather than to seek compromise and security.

Help me to see what is of everlasting value in cultural and religious traditions; help me to forge ahead and to be true to my own nature without being hindered by false assumptions of the past or by passing fads of the present.

Let me understand that my femininity is a gift of God to be acknowledged with gratitude and delight; let me know that womanhood is not a situation in conflict with manhood but that both are created equal for the purpose of mutual love and support.

Help me to grow according to my own nature so that I may be able to fulfill my destiny according to your will.

I pray for all my sisters in the world—may they live as your children in freedom and peace. Amen.