

## FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



Master, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

Pope Saint John Paul II lost his mother when he was a small child. In his encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* (Rich in Mercy) he reflected on the maternal aspect of the love of God.

He spoke of the two ways in which God’s love is expressed in the Old Testament, where the Hebrew Scriptures use the words ‘Hesed’ and ‘Rahamin’. Hesed is masculine, and means a profound attitude of goodness, and a willingness to love no matter what. But this love is lacking without ‘Rahamin’, which is feminine, and literally means ‘the womb of love and mercy’.

The love of God the Father cannot be fully understood or experienced without speaking of a maternal love. Rahamin is a love that is completely gratuitous, not merited, and is expressed in the deep and original bond that links a mother to her child. Rahamin generates a whole range of feelings, says Saint John Paul II, including goodness and tenderness, patience and understanding, that is, readiness to forgive.

The Old Testament attributes to the Lord precisely these characteristics when it uses the term ‘Rahamin’ in speaking of Him. This love, faithful and invincible thanks to the mysterious power of motherhood is expressed in the Old Testament in various ways as salvation from danger, especially from enemies, also the forgiveness of sins.

As we celebrate Mother’s Day, we honor our moms for all that they have done, and do, for us. Our mothers are an expression of the love of God. We have known the ‘womb of God’s love and mercy’ thanks to our mothers!

Motherhood is measured in minutes, hours, days, years, and a lifetime of self sacrifice and giving. Moms do all this because they love. It is their nature to love. They do not love because they try to, or have to, they love because that is who they are.

Ask any of the Moms here today what are the State of New Jersey Department of Children and Families Guidelines. They would not know.

Ask your mom to quote New Jersey Statute, Title 9, relating to Children and Domestic Care. I bet she hasn’t got a clue.

Ask her to name the Federal Child Welfare laws. She would not be able to do it.

Our moms don’t need to know these rules, statutes, laws and commandments. Without knowing them they fulfill them, because they love.

St. Augustine said that we are exhorted, not to keep the commandments, but to love:

*“That we may come to love God. Could we love him, unless he first loved us? Though we were slow to love, let us not be slow to love in return. He loved us first....Love, and do as you will.” (St. Augustine, Sermons #110)*

As we honor our mothers today, we consider, and are grateful for, the countless ways they have shown us the maternal love of God.

Happy Mothers Day!

Fr. Sean