

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER -A MOTHER'S DAY

I would like to wish all of the mothers and grandmothers a very happy and blessed Mother's Day. However, I realize that this is Mother's Day unlike any other in recent memory since many of you are separated from your children this weekend due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The old saying takes on a new seriousness: It is better to be safe than sorry.

We have very beautiful readings for this Fifth Sunday of Easter. In the Acts of the Apostles we hear about the formation of the order of deacons. Here at OLC we have been blessed with three wonderful deacons over the years: Bob Gill (who was in the first class of deacons in the Diocese of Gary), Ralph Huber (who continues to serve our parish, and Tom Maicher (who now serves at Holy Spirit Parish). We are so very grateful for their dedication and generosity.

In the First Letter of St. Peter we read his great analogy of the members of the Church being "living stones ... built into a spiritual house." As we have been experiencing during the current health crisis, "the Church" is not limited to the building in which we worship (as central as it is and as much as we want to be back there together again). We continue to be united as "the Church" because, by our baptism, we have been called "to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices."

Everything we are doing to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe is a sacrifice we can offer to God.

So too are our efforts to reach out to the sick and to the elderly who are homebound and often alone.

Furthermore, although watching the Mass on TV or online is not the same as being together in our beautiful church building, we are the beautiful Church united in our common prayer for each other and for the world.

Finally, we have today's Gospel which is the one most frequently chosen for funeral liturgies. As a matter of fact, I chose it for my Mother's (and Father's) funeral. Jesus promises to prepare a place for us in our heavenly Father's house, where there are "many dwelling places."

I can't help but think of my Mom who was always very welcoming to my friends and those of my brothers. There was always room for one more at the table; most of my friends Moms (as well as the Dads) felt the same. I imagine many of you can relate to this attitude which is a loving reflection of God's own "hospitality." As the children's song puts it: "God's house is a very big house."

How do we get to the Father's house? Jesus tells us that he is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." If we follow him by nurturing a prayerful relationship with him, if we believe in the Gospel he teaches, we will know the abundant life he came to give us ... in this world and the next.

In conclusion, Jesus said: "Whoever believes in me will do the works that I do." We are all called to be "icons" of Jesus for others, "windows" through which they can see God's love for them. I was truly blest to have such an icon in my Mom ... and my Dad. They weren't perfect ... no human being ever has been ... except our Blessed Mother Mary. May we always turn to her as friends of her Son, asking her to pray for us. She too will welcome us into her embrace as she gently leads us closer to Jesus.