

Mothers Help Us Find the Path to Heaven

In this week's Gospel, Jesus tells His disciples to "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature." And in our first reading, the apostles see Jesus ascend to the heavens, but need a bit of a reminder from the two men dressed in white garments that Jesus will return one day again.

We of course live in the "in between" time, and it's up to us to travel the road to heaven and help others figure out how to do that through living a life of growing in holiness and helping others to do the same.

Doing this though requires finding ourselves and our talents; it takes a long time to sort out who we are, to grow up and mature, to figure out what we are called to do. It also takes a bit of effort to believe in ourselves the way Jesus believed in His apostles. Thankfully, we do not travel the road of life alone.

In our lives, there are a number of people who help us to understand the nature of God; to see Jesus in our lives even though we can not see Him physically. Mothers, who we honor in a special way this week on Mother's Day, do this in so many ways.

Like most everyone, my earliest memories are of my family life, and I have been so blessed to have a loving family. With respect to my mom, as a child, she was always there for me to help me believe in myself and find my gifts. One memory I'll never forget is when our school had a book fair and I was in kindergarten. I did not have a dog at the time but always loved dogs, and remember there was a book with a golden dog and a boy on the cover (I suppose you could call that a foreshadow of the future). It looked interesting to me. Mom though ended up getting a cardboard box full of books from that book fair, and over that following summer and into the next year, we'd spend a lot of time working together on sounding out words. At the time it seemed like a lot of work, but what mom was doing was actually helping me to be free - to be free to enjoy reading, so I could read that book for myself. As the years went by we'd walk up to the library together, and over time there were so many more great memories that followed. Mom would help me learn so much about the faith by putting into action with respect to all that she would do for our family; she was always there to listen, to console, to inspire, to help. She loves her family deeply and would do anything for them. To this day I cherish visiting her and dad regularly, and we'll talk throughout the week, and visiting home is always a high point of my week which I often do on Sunday afternoons. It's been a delight to see her become a grandmother and interact with my nephew Henry in the way she did with me growing up.

We can learn about the faith through theology books, but faith has to be put into action for us to truly understand it. Our mothers do that in so many ways.

I look at every day of life as a gift. Part of me wishes I could see the final destination, but faith is not blind - I trust God has a plan, and will help me get there. But he's also give me some great guides to help me on my journey, and I know that every day no

matter what happens for the rest of my life, my mom will be there to help me. Maybe not to sound out words in books about dogs, but rather to sort out what needs to be done as I continue my journey trying to become a saint.

Mom is a great artist, and it's been great to see her take it up again as a hobby (she'll often paint some of the landscape pictures I take on my travels). Her work though doesn't hang in a gallery though I think it could. Rather she lived her life working for her family, helping us in so many ways day in and day out, and in the process has helped me, my sister, my dad and my nephew to get a beautiful portrait of what God's love looks like in action. What a gift our moms are. Let's honor them not just one day, but every day of the year.

God's blessings to you this week, and a big "thank you" to all of those who live out the vocation of motherhood.

Blessings,
Fr. Paul