Mothers Show Us the Meaning of Jesus' Commandment to Love one Another

In the Gospel for this week, Jesus says to His disciples: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." And as to what the commandments are, remember Jesus summarizes all of God's laws into one commandment with three parts: loving God with our whole heart, mind and soul, and loving our neighbor as ourselves.

From an early age, our mothers, whom we celebrate today, help us to know just how to do that.

While I may have a bias, I've been blessed with an incredible mother who has really shown the meaning of the commandment through how she's lived her life.

For one, there is the sacrifices that both she and my dad have made for our family. As a young woman, my mom loved painting. She still does, having re-discovered her talents in recent years. I'd see various paintings at my grandparents' home, but for the most part growing up in the 80s, while she'd sketch here and there, she was a bit too busy to paint as much as she'd like. This isn't to say she was all work and no fun. It's just to say that her priorities were our family; and that took up a lot of time. Both her and dad worked so hard to turn our house into a home, and while they had the occasional date night, their lives were both focused on doing so much for my sister and me, and their own parents.

I also learned the value of prayer; both mom and dad would pray with me growing up, and no matter what, we made sure to be at Mass each weekend. And if that meant getting back in town late on a summer Sunday, we'd go down to Saint Lawrence by the U of M, which in the 80s was one of the few parishes with a Sunday Mass.

And so too, did I learn the importance of loving myself - the sometimes-overlooked part of that commandment. Mom would help me find my gifts, but I also take that part to mean we seek the best for ourselves through true love, and fine tuning our gifts and talents. Mom knew she had to be, well, mom, and so she'd challenge me to believe in myself, and to also work hard helping me to read, and to learn new things. To be sure I had plenty of fun as a kid, but mom knew that talent isn't found by sitting on the couch all day, and she helped me in so many ways to really grow as a person. Today, it's so great to see her as a grandmother and how she's helping my nephew Henry to do the same thing.

Like my mom, and like all humans, I am truly still a work in progress. But I can honestly say that as I strive to grow in holiness, the road to heaven is easier to find because God, in His wisdom, has given me great people to help me find the way there like my mom, Mary.

And so, to all of our mothers, thank you. Thank you for getting up in the middle of the night when we were infants. Thank you for helping us to tie our shoes, to sound out the words in books, and how to write. Thank you for lifting up our spirits when we were down. Thank you for giving us the confidence and helping us to believe in ourselves

when it seemed like we couldn't do something or wanted to give up. Thank you for listening and helping us to grow. Thank you for the incredible difficulty it took to let go as we got on the school bus for the first time and went off to college or work. Thank you for your patience when you wondered if the stork got the wrong address and we went through mood swings and crazy times as teenagers. Thank you for your prayers, for your example in all you've done for us and so many others. For through you, no matter what life throws at us, we will know the way to follow Jesus because you've helped us to stay on that road and illuminated it through the testament of your lives. Never forget the importance of your vocation and of all that you have done for your children. Because of you, so many of us know what Jesus' commandment is all about.

Have a blessed week!

Fr. Paul