

Mother's Day and the Vocation of All Women

"The Church gives thanks for each and every woman: for mothers, for sisters, for wives; for women consecrated to God in virginity; for women dedicated to the many human beings who await the gratuitous love of another person; for women who watch over the human persons in the family . . . for women who work professionally . . . for "perfect" women and for "weak" women—for all women . . ."

—Pope Saint John Paul II



Mother's Day is a beautiful opportunity to honor our mothers. But for women who struggle with the cross of infertility or loss, the beauty of the day can be overshadowed by anxiety, sadness and feelings of shame and isolation. Many women either leave Mass hastily, or decide not to attend at all, to avoid the pain of remaining seated as all the mothers around them stand. But the Church affirms the dignity and innate call of *every woman* to motherhood. Every woman has the capacity to "give life" in a variety of ways, all of which are necessary to create *a culture of life* and *a civilization of love*.

This Mother's Day, our parish family can honor biological mothers, who sacrifice so much to give life, *as well as those women who live out their call to be mothers in other ways*: adoptive mothers, foster mothers, Godmothers, aunts, spiritual mothers, religious sisters, mentors, and those women who see the needs of others and come to their aid. This does not diminish the gift of physical motherhood, but gives us the opportunity to come alongside those women longing for motherhood, whose cross is so heavy, and help them to shoulder the burden by affirming their feminine genius and the unique contribution and witness they make to the body of Christ and to the world.

Springs in the Desert invites you to utilize the pastoral resources here and on our website. We hope they will help you and your parish family honor mothers this weekend, while also recognizing the unique gifts and *spiritual motherhood* of those women carrying the burden of infertility and loss.



Pastoral Resources for Mass on Mother's Day

Special Blessing

The Mother's Day blessing can cause a significant amount of pain and anxiety for the women present who are struggling with infertility. When it comes time for the blessing, please consider asking all women to stand, acknowledging mothers first, and then all women who live out different aspects of motherhood each day. Another possibility is to impart the special blessing at the end of Mass when the entire congregation is already standing. This acknowledges the mothers present without drawing attention to those who remain seated, grieving the fact that they have no children (or no living children). Either option can be an opportunity to honor the good of motherhood, acknowledge the struggle with infertility and loss, and affirm the spiritual motherhood to which all women are called.

This Mother's Day, we give thanks for all women and the many unique ways that they live out the gift of motherhood. Let us remember with gratitude and joy our own mothers, grandmothers, and those women who have been spiritual mothers to us. We pray for hope and healing for mothers who have lost children, for those struggling to become mothers, and those whose hearts long for the gift of children. We ask God to make His presence known to these women through their longing. We pray for mothers who battle feelings of inadequacy, that they may recognize the gift that they are to the world. Open the eyes of all women to see that they are enough and they are deeply loved. We remember and pray for our mothers who have passed into eternity. We pray for healing for those who have strained relationships with their mothers or mothers that have strained relationships with their children. We ask for an increase of all women to recognize and answer the call to live out the gift of spiritual motherhood in our world today. We entrust all of these women to the hands of Mary, Blessed Virgin, and ask God's blessings upon them this day and always. Amen.

Bulletin Announcement

Please consider using the announcement below in your parish bulletin.

For Catholics struggling with infertility and pregnancy loss, Mother's Day can be hard—but there is hope and healing in community! Springs in the Desert is a Catholic ministry that accompanies these women and couples by offering them a place of respite and solidarity where they can know God's love for them and discover His unique call to fruitfulness. For virtual and in-person events and encouraging blog posts, resources, and podcast episodes, visit www.springsinthedesert.org.

Prayer of the Faithful

Below are some options from which to choose as additions to the intercessions you are already using for Mass on Mother's Day.

- For the women and couples who are bearing the cross of primary or secondary infertility, that they may know God's loving presence and trust in His plan for fruitfulness in their marriages...
- For those who have lost a child through miscarriage, in infancy, or any time in their lives, that they may rest in the Lord's loving embrace and be comforted by His merciful plan for their loved ones...
- For the women who are loving spiritual mothers to us, especially our godmothers, aunts, mentors and all women who positively impact our lives...
- For couples experiencing infertility, that we as the Body of Christ may walk with them, support them, and listen with open hearts as they share their stories with us...