

What makes our mothers such a gift? Why do they influence our entire lives? Compassion, unconditional love, patience, joy, surrender, self-sacrifice – these are just a few attributes that mothers demonstrate. Hopefully, most of us have noticed these qualities in our mothers.



Today, however, many mothers do not receive the honor and credit they deserve. Motherhood itself is even found suspect by women who put a career or pleasure first. There is no question that motherhood demands tremendous sacrifices. The many mothers who undertake to raise their children alone, without the support of the father of their children, are an example of this. True motherhood requires what we all desire deep down: courage, dedication, selflessness, and the fulfillment and joy that naturally follow. This is what we honor in our mothers.

Motherhood is sacred because every mother not only brings her child into the world but provides them with the foundation on which to build their future. Jesus gave us an example of honoring our mothers when, even during the anguish and torment of the cross, he entrusted his beloved disciple John with the care of his mother ([John 19:27](#)).

The key to being a mother involves more than giving birth to and raising children. Mary, the mother of Jesus, understood that only by surrendering her will to God and committing to serving him alone would she be able to overcome her fears and be able to nurture and guide the child within her. It is this motherly dedication to serving God that brings every child – indeed every family – the greatest sense of peace and security.

by Crystal Eason

Praise God for mothers! Brought into the world by our mother's labor, taught how to navigate the world through our mother's wisdom; fed by our mother's patience, led by our mother's love. Our mother is the most influential woman in the shaping of our character and she is the woman we honor on this Sunday.

Mother is a name bestowed and earned from the moment of her first infant's first cry, promising great measures of joy and pain. This pain comes at more than the tiny vulnerable hand of the needy infant: mothers face unique challenges in this world.

Mothers who have the opportunity to stay home with their children as their husband works may feel underappreciated and some even feel derided. They encounter dismissal as if their problems and stressors are less valid than the stress of a working individual. Though children are a great gift, they can be a thankless one and some stay-at-home mothers lament the lack of appreciation and fulfillment.

Mothers in a joint-income family find themselves torn between responsibilities. The cost of children drive ten percent more mothers into the workforce than that of the general population of women. Now facing accusations of cold careerism, this rising percent of mothers tries to balance their demands at work while still carrying the societal burden of the expectancy that they will also mother the same way as a stay-at-home mom. Husbands may share the load or may unknowingly lay that very burden upon their wives by presuming the pattern they saw modeled by previous generations. Indeed, studies have suggested that working mothers still perform over two-thirds of the household tasks. Over a third of working mothers express sentiments of burn-out despite the increased sense of fulfillment associated with working outside the home.

Mothers who work and parent alone face a never-ending slew of challenges. Torn between the full-time responsibility of parenthood and the full-time job in the workplace, her heart rends between the necessity of the paycheck and the cry of her children's homesickness as her days stretch long. The list of tasks never seems to wane and the

piles of paperwork seems to grow taller by the hour. Her paycheck itself is spliced thinner than she can believe as her expenses must also cover expensive childcare for any time she spent at work. The demands of work and home leave her no respite.

This final class of mothers is the one that faces the greatest injustices. They do not fit any single demographic; their population is representative of the population at large in every way but their poverty. Forty percent of low-income families are headed by a solitary mother and the poverty rate for single mothers is five times the rate of married families. Half of single-mother families live in extreme poverty, meaning a single mother of two children must try to sustain her family upon \$200 a week.

For love of her children, she works diligently and tirelessly in a job that is insufficient to provide a living wage. Made vulnerable by her children, she falls prey to injustices devastating in her precarious situation. Of any demographic, legal aid most frequently encounters and assists single mothers. Single mothers deal with matters of physical and legal custody, with collecting child support – only ten percent of single mothers receive child support, with legally recognizing the biological father, and other legal challenges from predatory lending, wage theft, health, consumer, housing and other legal issues. In this overwhelming onslaught of legal challenges that so often face single mothers with resources already stretched thin, legal aid is indispensable in caring for the rising class of single mothers.

Mothers do far more than they ever hope to receive gratitude for. Remember to appreciate the mothers in your life this Sunday. To a mother, time is an invaluable commodity in scarce supply. By your time, words, and thoughtful assistance, you may speak volumes of appreciation far beyond those of a standard impersonal gift.

I am very thankful for the Mother I have and her influence in my life. I do recognize that not everyone has this blessing. This is why Mother's Day can sometimes bring out many different emotions in people.

There are women who have lost their mothers, women who have absent mothers, women who are desperately trying or have tried to have a baby and become a mother themselves, and women who are single mothers having to be a mother and father to their children. The list goes on. We all know women like this or are those very women ourselves. So this year and every year let me suggest something. On Mother's Day, let's not only celebrate our mothers and the mothers of the world, but let's celebrate the women in our lives who have helped us become the women WE are today. These women are everywhere.

Maybe they are your favorite teacher, your aunt, your grandmother, your stepmother, your neighbor, or a friend. We all have "mothered" someone and have shown them love and support in their time of need. So, let's thank and celebrate those women in our lives too.

We wouldn't be who we are today without them.

So again, on Mother's Day I want us to celebrate not just mothers of the world, but the women that helped us to become the strong and beautiful women that we are.

