

MAY 14, 2023: 6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER



I can clearly remember the first workshop I gave as Director of the Office for Worship. It was a workshop for liturgical ministers, and the first week would be attended by everyone. It concerned general liturgical information that was not directed at any particular ministry. It was held at Our Lady, Comforter of the Afflicted in Waltham. That first night my mom was in attendance. As soon as the presentation was over, I headed over to my mom's table and asked, "What did I do wrong, or what could I have done better?" All the other people at the table were a little taken aback by my question and assured me that it was a wonderful presentation. My mom, on the other hand, had a very different response. She told

me that she had a list of ten things that needed to be changed, and then she proceeded to tell me what they were. She, of course, was correct: the changes she recommended made for a much better presentation. My mom was a teacher and so, with her many years of experience, I trusted that she could guide me in doing things better.

People often remark on how I can be so direct in my responses on issues. (As they say, the fruit does not fall far from the tree.) I will admit that my dad was very much the same. I always appreciated my parents' directness and honesty. You always knew where you stood and what they were thinking about your actions. My mom has always shown me respect in how she approached her parenting, and that taught me much about how to interact with other people.

My mom is also a woman of deep and abiding faith. As a family we took in around 37 foster children throughout the years. Even though we didn't really have any extra money, my mom was clear about why this was necessary. God had shown her so much love in her life that she had no choice but to share that love with others. And I must admit that my mom's life was not an easy one. She lost her father when she was around six years old. Her mom had to go to work at a time when that was not the norm, and she also had to deal with a child who had cerebral palsy. But, even with all of the struggles they faced as a family, they always trusted in God, knowing that He was always walking with them.

As I look at my own faith journey, I have to say that it was heavily influenced by my mom. And most powerfully by her love of the Eucharist and how that should lead to living a life centered in Christ. My mom demonstrated her love of the faith by how she lived her life. I have tried to mirror her example, but I am not always as successful.

Reflecting on my mom's influence in my life makes me realize the impact each of us is called to have in the life of others. Bringing the message of Christ is essential, of course, but for that message to be believed it must be demonstrated. As Saint James wrote in his epistle, "Show me your faith without works and I will show you the faith that underlies my works. Faith without works is dead." We must be clear: it is *not* either talk about the faith or live the faith. It must be both—we must talk about *and* live our faith. We have been given the greatest gift possible—the knowledge about who Jesus really is. And that knowledge must be the foundation of the life we live.

We must be willing both in word and action to share our faith. It cannot be a private affair. A faith that is kept private—one that is just between you and God—is not a Christian faith. It is a faith devoid of true meaning and value. Jesus wants people to know about Him and He has chosen *us* to bring Him to them by our words and actions.

The message we have to share in this Easter Season is amazing. "God so loved the world that He sent his only Son, not to condemn the world but that it might be saved." He also came in order that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

We have a message of hope and joy that is so incredible. We should be shouting it from the rooftops. We have been given such tremendous gifts in the scriptures, teachings of the Church, and the sacraments. In each

of these we have the ability to encounter God and Jesus is a direct and real way. We simply need to be open to how God desires to share them with us.

The lesson I learned from my mom is that there are lots of reasons to doubt and *not* use the gifts we have been given. We can come up with many excuses for why it is not the right time to share our faith with the world. But there is one overarching reason to share our faith: God loved us enough to die for us so that we could truly live, and live abundantly.

Happy Mother's Day to all our wonderful mothers!

If you have any questions about anything, please do not hesitate to ask me directly, or send your questions to me at fr.brian@theholyrood.org , or if easier please call or text me at (978) 254-0560.

Please keep me in your prayers.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Fr. Brian", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Fr. Brian