

May 13, 2012  
6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

A Blessing Today on our Mothers, living and deceased. Thank you for not only giving us love, but often teaching us how to love...

*This is my commandment, 'love one another as I have loved you...'*

Springtime is track and field time. Saint Paul himself must have spent some time enjoying this spring sport, for more than once he uses the images from track in his epistles: "I have run the race..."

For me, one of the more interesting track and field events is the high jump. Once a certain height has been attained and surpassed, the bar is raised and a new jump challenges the leaper to go even higher.

This seems like a good image for the goal that Jesus Christ sets in today's gospel. His goal for our high jumping is that we would attain his height as we leap forward.

Jesus raises the bar on love. "Love one another, *as I have loved you.*" That is a high challenge! And he indicates it is such when he goes on to say, "No one has greater love than this than to lay down one's life for his friends." That is what HE has done for us. He challenges us in our own lives to practice similar self-sacrificing lives.

For many of us this does not provide daily opportunities, only occasional ones. However today, in the USA, we honor mothers, and they, more than the rest of us, often have the opportunities to practice such love. I could not know it at the time, but my aunts would tell me later, that when I was born and there were complications, my mother told the doctor, "If it comes to a choice between saving the life of the baby or my own, save the baby."

So, especially on this day, I am grateful that my own mother, Kathryn, "Kitty McCarthy Fitzgerald" was willing to make that choice. And I am grateful for the many moms who sometimes love their children more than their own welfare.

There are other kinds of sacrificial love, of course, sometimes on the battlefield. And then there is all kinds of little mundane opportunities to practice self-sacrificing love, like letting a waiting car ahead of you as you are in heavy traffic, or giving up a seat on a crowded bus to an elderly person.

Whether it is in such small ways, or in larger momentous decisions, we raise the bar on what is normally expected. We soar higher. We exceed what the passing crowd expects. And we fulfill the challenge of today's second reading:

*"Beloved, let us love one another because love is of God, and everyone who loves is begotten by God And knows God."*

- A historical note. This week the President of the USA gave his personal approval to Gay Marriage. The states will decide whether they agree. The Catholic bishops as well as many other religious leaders will oppose this. It certainly does contradict a long Judeo-Christian belief that marriage is to be between a man and a woman. The question comes down to: *Can the government decree something that the Church does not accept. In a secular society, it can and does. Exhibit A is divorce. The State grants divorces while the Church does not accept them, or grants annulments. Contrary to what many people believe we do NOT live in a Christian nation. Rather we live in a secular nation with a division between church and state. The Church will be free to continue to teach that marriage is only between a man and a woman. The State is free to decree otherwise. So long as the State does not impose gay marriage on the Church, it would seem the two views can coexist side by side, just as the State granting divorces and the Church denying them has coexisted.*

For Breakfast Discussion: I thank God that my Mother: .....

For Personal Reflection: If Gay Marriage becomes a reality, will it destroy marriage as we know it?