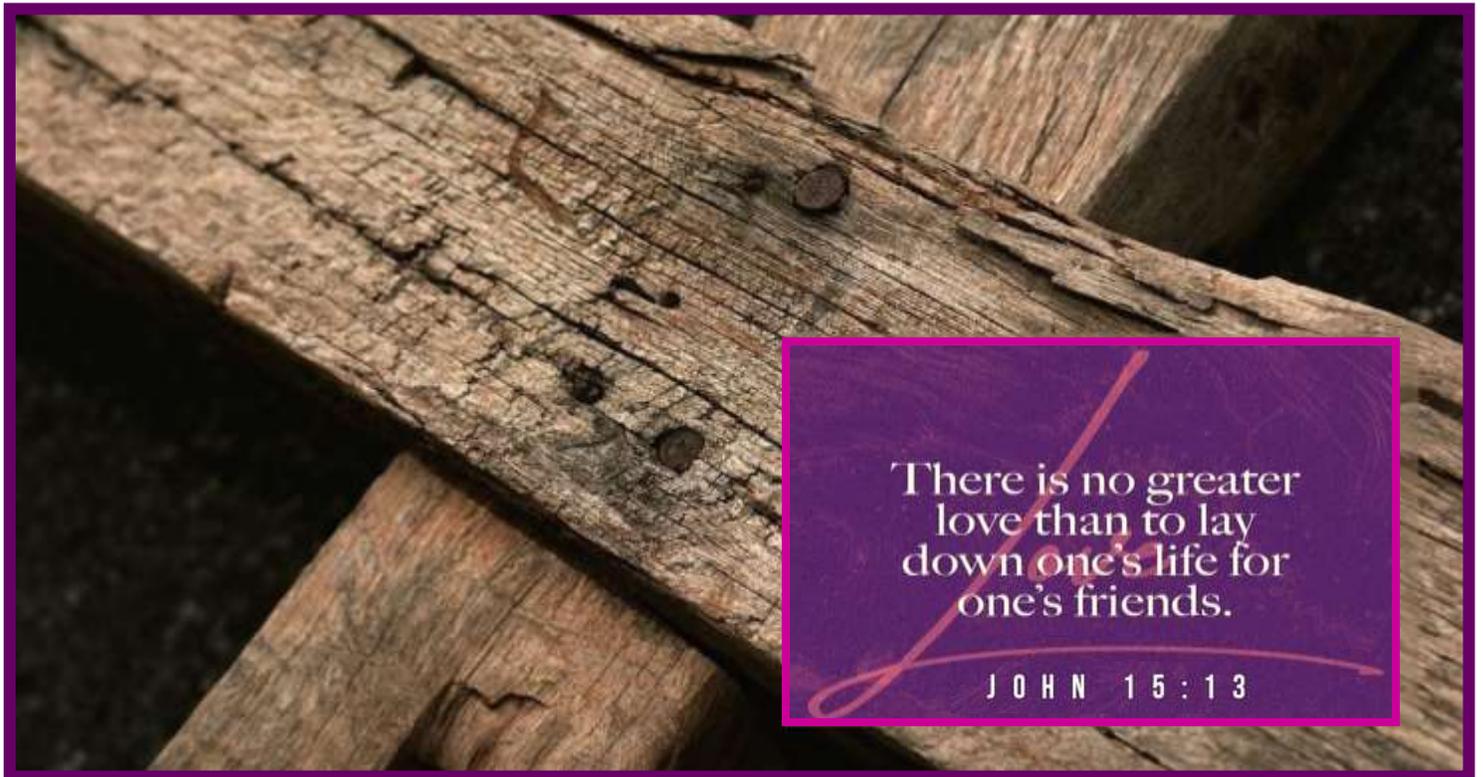

My Sermon from Sunday May 9, 2021, Easter 6, 'Mother's Day' ~ "Unconditional Love"

"Beloved, let us love one another because love is from God." Amen.



Happy Mother's Day to all of our mothers and to all the woman who have loved us and taught us and cared for us and supported us. Jesus told us that the greatest sign of love is *"to lay down one's life for one's friends."* (John 15:12). And isn't that what every mother would do? To lay down her life for her child? I remember when I was 15 years old, I went on my one and only fly-in fishing trip to a little lake north of Terrace Bay which is on the shores of Lake Superior. I flew up to the fishing camp in the first small plane trip, along with a family friend and his 16 year old son. The pilot dropped us off and then returned in his sea plane to pick up my parents and all the supplies. My parents flew north to join us but low-lying clouds and fog came in. This is a common problem around Terrace Bay. The pilot had no choice but to keep flying north, away from the hills that he could no longer see. He brought the plane up to a high altitude above the clouds. They flew for hours and hours until the plane ran out of fuel and the pilot told my parents that they would have to land the plane. As they flew back down through the clouds my mother thought it was the end and they would have to crash land into trees. The wonder is that when they descended through the heavy layers of clouds and could finally see, they discovered that they were over a lake! They landed safely on the lake and then spent the night in a little cabin owned by a northern pulp and paper company.

I had no idea about this perilous adventure as I was stuck in a small cabin on the fishing lake with the previous group of 2 men plus my parents' friend and his son.

We had no method of communication and we knew the fog was thick and too dangerous for anyone to land. The challenge is that it was the 2nd flight with my parents that had all the food. For several days, the weather did not change and we lived on fish that we caught. Eventually, an Otter plane was sent from Winnipeg to pick us up. I will never forget the look on my mother's face when we met back in Terrace Bay. I then heard about my Mom and Dad's flight. My mother looked at me and said she thought it was the end for them and that she was very thankful that I was not on that plane with them as she would willingly give up her life for me. That is a mother's love. The sad part of this story is that years later, the pilot did indeed die in a plane crash.

A mother's love is unconditional and teaches us that we are called to love one another as Jesus has loved us. I will forever treasure the years I spent with our 4 children in our home. That dependence of a child upon their parent is a lesson of how you and I are called to abide in the love of God. This is what gives God **JOY**. This is what gives our mothers **JOY**. This is what gave me **JOY**. I didn't mind folding laundry into piles for each child each and every night. I didn't mind packing all those school lunches. I used to love to watch them play outside in our small city backyard in a sandbox and on the swing set or skate on the rink that Jouni flooded for them in the winter. Those lovely years end so quickly. Everyone knows that our children grow up and leave us and we wouldn't want it any other way. As the saying goes, "*we hold our children's hands for a little while but their hearts forever.*"



In his first letter, John writes that we are children of God and with faith in Jesus, we have been born of God. John goes on to say that "***everyone who loves the parent loves the child.***" (1 John 5:1). What this means is that if we have faith in God and love God as our parent then we will love each other as children of God.

I treasure what we learn about Mary, the mother of Jesus, in the Bible. She understood sacrifice more than any of us. She was always there for her son ~ when the holy family fled to Egypt from Bethlehem and then moved to Nazareth, when she along with Joseph searched for 12 year old Jesus in Jerusalem, at his first miracle at the wedding in Cana when he changed water into wine, when he was rejected in his hometown of Nazareth, when she would visit him during his ministry. Mary was with Jesus at the foot of the cross. She had the courage to watch her son die. Jesus then entrusted her into the care of John. Mary went with John to the town of Ephesus where she lived out the rest of her life.

The message of **Mother's Day** is the message of **love**. The message of **Jesus** is the message of **love**. When we turn to God in faith, we are children of God and through our love of God we *"can conquer the world."* (1 John 5:4-5).

This is the 2nd year in a row when we can't celebrate as we would like with the women we love. May God's love bless us and keep us steadfast as we journey in faith throughout the pandemic. May nothing stop us from believing that we can conquer the world, in the spirit of our mothers.

I am going to close with words from **A.A. Milne**, who wrote the *Winnie The Pooh* books. May you hear the voice of your mother, whether she is in heaven or just down the road saying these loving words to you:

"If ever there is a tomorrow when we're not together, there is something you must always remember. You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think. But the most important thing is, even if we're apart, I'll always be with you."

Amen.

Archdeacon Deborah+

