

A little girl asked her mother, "How did the human race start?"

The mother answered, "God made Adam and Eve, they had children and so all of humankind was made."

The little girl walked away, but two days later she asked her father the same question.

The Father answered, "Many years ago there were monkeys from which the human race evolved."

The confused girl returned to her mother and said, "Mom, how is it possible that you told me the human race was created by God, and Dad said they developed from monkeys?"

The mother answered, "It is very simple. Both are true... I told you about my side of the family and your Father told you about his."

Happy Mother's Day! Moms always seem to have the right answers. No worry men and fathers, we have more to say about this come Father's Day!

There's no one who wants to see love, unity and closeness in the family more than a mother. In our passage today it is the love of a parent for a child that serves as the analogy for God's relationship to Jesus. Jesus' prayer is for that same love, unity and closeness for those who believe his message.

It Is A Love that reaches back prior to the incarnation.

It Is A Love made known and available to the human community in the revelation of Jesus.

It Is A Love that gets redefined by Jesus' act of self-giving. As the community of believers demonstrates the love with which it has been loved, it

exhibits the mutuality between the Father and the Son and the unity for which Jesus prayed. When anyone of us, but today in particular we celebrate women and Mothers, when we demonstrate this type of love, we are modeling the same divine relationship as God and Jesus. And that makes a huge difference in the world!

I believe Mothers have a unique relationship with Jesus, with God. They understand this desire to be one. Keep the chicks together. Don't let any get away. Johnny Cash sang, "Are All the Children In," a tribute to mothers. On Mother's Day we talk about love; about mother's who have sacrificed so much for their families and others. We believe in a sacrificial love from God the Father, through Jesus Christ the Son. A mother's love is also sacrificial in the sense that they will do nearly anything for their families.

In fact, we include all women in this discussion, moms and others, who instinctively care for people. We give thanks to women today for that deep love; a unifying love, an abiding love that brings us together as family, as community, as church. When we lose a mother or a woman of faith, the family, the church and the community suffers. Mothers and women make a difference in the lives of many!

This is the love that Jesus is describing in John's gospel, "I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the *love* you have for me may be in them, and that I myself may be in them" [John 17:26].

Chapter 17 in John is a lengthy prayer by Jesus. His prayer goes out to the ends of the earth. First, he prayed for himself after he had told his disciples about the Cross that awaits him. Even though Jesus tells about this horrible ending to his life he then gives the disciples a new commandment -- to love one another. He attempts to comfort his disciples who are grief stricken, telling them that, "No one comes to the Father except through me" [John 14:6b], Jesus promises the disciples the Holy Spirit, all this before Jesus gives us today's prayer. All this before he begins that last week of passion, culminating in his arrest, death and resurrection.

After Jesus prays for himself and his disciples, he envisions the future and seeing the larger context, **Jesus prays for us**. He prays for those beyond the Palestine of 2000 years ago who will come to be believers. This "us" is the community; the church community, your family and mine.

Jesus prays that the believers who hear and follow his message have the same type of relationship, a close, loving and intimate relationship with God and with those in the church. It is a unity brought about by personal relationship. For many of us, mom is or was a best friend, someone we could always go to for answers, encouragement, and support. Mom is someone we trust, respect and listen to when in need of strength. For some of us, moms or other women in our life, have been the guiding force, the light that helped us find our way in the world, find our footing, find our faith. Mother's prayers make a difference in our world.

My dictionary defines '*prayer*' with these words, "**an act of communion with God.**" Jesus' prayer, his communing with God the Father, includes us in that unified, close, loving relationship. This is a mother's deep desire. Women who have influenced our lives also want to know this close, loving relationship. Jesus wants God, his disciples and the rest of us to see and understand this distinctive intimate unity between Father and Son and believers. If nothing else this clearly provides us an affirmation of the communion of the saints. And those saints certainly include women.

I think it's a wonderful thing to know Jesus prays for us. But, do we believe that?? Jesus prays with such confidence and faith; unabashedly asking God and believing he will receive his request. Father and Son are so close there seems to be no hint that this prayer **will not** be granted. Jesus is so sure, so unshaken.

Oh, if we could only pray like Jesus: with confidence, with certainty, and with hope. It is this special binding relationship that Jesus prays for the church community, for us. We can go in prayer to the Father, through his Son, Jesus Christ and ask and receive. I find that bold and a little scary! It's easier said than done.

How is our prayer life? Perhaps we learned first to pray with our mother's hovering over our bedsides as we said; **Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the**

Lord my soul to keep, If I shall die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take. Do you know your mothers prayed for you?

I believe that mothers' prayers must be in the billions every day. Our moms have shown us their devotion to their families when they pray for us. Mothers prayed for us before we were born. Mothers prayed for us throughout our lives. Mothers are always seeking unity, close family relationships, peace and love to reign in our lives. Just like Jesus, who prayed for us!

So, how are we doing with our own prayers? Do we have the confidence, the trust and willingness to ask Jesus for that which we need? Another definition of prayer is, "*the slightest chance of hope.*" I believe our prayer lives can take on the rich, intimate relationship with God the Father and with Jesus Christ his Son, when we pray with *the slightest chance of hope.* And that takes confidence!

What slightest chance did Jesus have going into his last week of his life? What *slightest chance* was there that his disciples would truly follow him and deliver his message to the ends of the earth? What *slightest chance* was there that his prayer, included you and me and that Jesus wanted nothing less than our relationship with God the Father to be like his? What *slightest chance* were your mother's prayers prayed for you?

Larry wrote his Mother's Day message from a passage also found in John's Gospel -- Jesus' mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene stood near the cross. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that time on, this disciple took her into his home [John 19:25-27 CEB].

I don't have Larry's sermon, but in this scripture, Jesus, hanging from the cross, says to John, his disciple, "Here is your mother." Someone, somewhere, a mother, another women, cared for you, loved you, prayed for you and wanted only the best for you. They wanted you to know the love of Christ, the love that Christ had for God the Father to also be in your relationship with God. Hold onto that thought, that hope, that mother's prayer that was said for you; hold onto Christ's prayer said for you. And may we all care for those who have cared and prayed for us. Amen.