

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Quincy, IL
Rev. Martin Eden

Easter 6
Saturday, May 13, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, May 14, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.

“I Will not Leave You as Orphans”

John 14:15-21

Christ is risen!! He is risen indeed!! Alleluia!!

The Sixth Sunday of Easter is already here. Thursday is Ascension Day. Pentecost is approaching. It is also Mother’s Day, and I wish a happy Mother’s Day to all. The loving action of a mother to her child seems so obvious to us and is celebrated by most all people – as it should be. Our culture, our society has made this a big day on the calendar – and for good reason. At the same time, the loving action of Christ our Lord, by most, is called foolishness.

I think it would be an interesting study to see the number of references on television and advertising in stores comparing Mother’s Day to Easter. According to the National Retail Federation, retail spending for Mother’s Day is way above Easter on what is spent in celebration of that day. But then, the focus on what we celebrate on Easter is found here, not at Walmart, not at Kelly’s or Tiramisu. In many ways, our world treats Mother’s Day with more respect than it does Easter.

If someone from North Korea, who has never seen or heard anything about the Western culture or Christianity, saw how the death and resurrection of the

Son of God was celebrated in America – with children seeking out eggs full of candy and people wearing silly bunny ears for one day (and then making no reference to it after that one day) – what do you think a visitor who is ignorant of the Gospel would perceive the message to be?

We celebrate Mother's Day. Not even a foreign visitor would think that the purpose of this day is so that this is the one day each year I have to acknowledge my mother, give her credit for bringing me life, and so I feel obligated to say nice things about her. No one would assume that this was the purpose of this one day. What would you think about the relationship of mother to child if this were the approach? Rather frightening, isn't it?

Yet, how does our world celebrate Easter? Go into any store and try to find evidence that it is the Sixth Sunday of Easter – other than a discount candy bin at the Dollar Store. Try and find any acknowledgement today, outside of the liturgy of the church, that the primary celebration of this day is that Christ is Risen and we are saved through Baptism. We continue to gather as the children of God and we hear the promise that He "will not leave us as orphans." And we continue to say "Christ is risen!! He is risen indeed!! Alleluia!!

In the world outside these walls, by the Tuesday after Easter, the signs in the stores had switched from Easter to probably Earth Day.

I hate to break it to all the mothers, but within a matter of days, the signage in the stores will be promoting Memorial Day. Our sinful, disposable, here today, gone tomorrow world wants Easter gone – because Satan does not want you to hear about the death and resurrection of Jesus. Satan also wants Mother’s Day to be here today and gone tomorrow, because he would like your relationship with your family to be nothing but shallow, superficial sentimentality. By the way, Satan certainly does not want a sincere celebration of Memorial Day in a couple of weeks either.

Satan does not want genuine love and sacrifice, (the willingness to suffer for the benefit of someone else) to be on display. But as we celebrate Mother’s Day, remember that genuine love is not about you or what you receive from a loving relationship. It is not about how you feel. Genuine love is about the other person. The real other person, not the one you imagine them to be. It is about the real human needs; real human weaknesses; real human shame that needs to be covered by your love, by your forgiveness. This is what mothers are called to do. This is what all Christians are called to do. It just seems that mother tend to do it better. It is all a part of God’s design, and we celebrate this work, because it can only properly flow from Christ – who has covered your weaknesses, covered your shame. He has not left you as orphans.

Not even the deep and abiding love of a mother can rescue and provide life for the children of God. But our Lord has called you to be His own through the power of His Word. He gathers you as His church – as a hen gathers her chicks under her wing – to use the words of Jesus. There is an old saying, “You will not have God as your Father if you do not have His church as your mother.”

The world outside of Christ’s Church is a place that you are not going to find the love you need or hear the words you need to hear. That world wants the Resurrection of our Lord to go away, because the world does not want to confront the reason, the need that the Son of God had to die. That same world wants your relationship between parent and child to be based on shallow, sentimental feelings expressed in \$4.00 greeting cards.

Love is the willingness to suffer for the benefit of someone else. Love is the willingness to cover sin and guilt and shame, even though doing so will come at a great cost. And no one shows this kind of love better than the Son of God. Amen.

Christ is risen!! He is risen indeed!! Alleluia!!

The peace of God which surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.