

Sermon Notes May 9th Sixth Sunday of Easter

[1 John 5:1-6](#) [John 15:9-17](#)

Jesus said to his disciples, “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.

As we continue to celebrate Eastertide this sixth Sunday of Easter, we also celebrate Mother’s Day! In the United States it is a tradition that dates back to after the early 1900’s and was not a church holy day.

Mothering Sunday, a United Kingdom tradition, dates back to the Middle Ages, when sons and daughters returned to their home church, where they were baptized--and usually where their mothers’ lived. On the fourth Sunday of Lent, sons and daughters were released from work to go home to their Mother Church and to visit with their families.

Mothers...We give thanks for the mothers (and fathers) and all the people who have nurtured us in our lives. As we look to the texts this week, we can also look to Mary, the Theotokos , the Mother of God or The God-Bearer. Mary, who experienced the fullness of Love when she said yes, to the Angel Gabriel, but Mary too as she held and raised a child who cried and laughed and even wandered away to be in the temple. (remember that it is in Luke that Mary ponders all these things in her heart including the greeting of Simeon who told her a sword would pierce her own heart also.

Mothers teaching us to love and children teaching parents to love more deeply as well.



These are images of two Icons that are wrapped in the traditions that they are actually traditions of people who knew Mary and that they are also likenesses of the Mother of Jesus. Tradition is that St. Luke painted the first icons of Mary the “God-bearer” Icon in the Eastern tradition.

Here Mary touches her face to Jesus and wraps her arms around Him. Jesus reaches up toward her and we are meant to be welcomed into that fullness of love. She is veiled with the stars of heaven. The tradition of the icon is that it a window, a glimpse into the infinite of God’s love, the eyes of Mary gazing at us welcoming us into to the Love of Christ.

The icon is an invitation for us to enter into the presence of God in prayer.

Our Lady of Vladimir 12th century, Russian



Our Lady of the Three hands

Tradition is that when images of Jesus were banned the artist refused not to paint the icon, believing that the Holy Spirit was guiding his hand. Saint John of Damascus was healed of his severed hand for painting the icon and this 8th century icon has been faithfully kept—and the icon kept safe—even carried by a donkey without a driver during a time of war and brought safely to Mount Athos. Again, the tradition is that this icon is of likeness of Mary.

The Theotokos, from Saint Catherine's monastery, Mt. Sinai



Early images of Mary from the monastic community of Saint Catherine, Mount Sinai, Egypt.

In the Gospel this Sunday, Jesus, shortly before his betrayal, has washed the feet of his disciples and is anticipating his death. What does this love look like? It looks like abiding in the vine; it looks like serving one another, it looks like healing and loving with abandon—some might say, it looks like Mary's own love for her son. It is the love for a friend, a love that God the Mother gives unconditionally to us—that we might love each other as family, as friends.

In thanksgiving for all the mothers and fathers and mentors and friends who hold us in their hearts and love us, that we might love because Christ loves us all.

Susan