

This Sunday: Freshmen are asked to attend the 7,8, or 10:15 Masses...

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This Sunday: the 9 o'clock Mass is reserved for the ROTC personnel exclusively.

And Just What Is A Mother?

Well, a mother is a person old enough to be an authority on Indians and cowboys, and young enough to remember the rules of all guessing games, and to recite all nursery rhymes. She must be smart enough to answer all questions about thunder, and locomotives, yet be surprised at the reason a chicken runs across the road. She's a detective, too -- able to find the top of the cereal box which was thrown away last week, or the missing roller skate. She must be a veterinarian, and accomplished at taking ticks off the dog, feeding the kittens, and remembering to change the water in the goldfish bowl. A mother must be more than a cook; she must also be able to decorate birthday cakes, and put the raisins in the correct spots for the face of the gingerbread man.

A mother must be a judge and arbitrator for the hundred crises that arise daily -- when someone wouldn't let someone else ride the tricycle. She must be a stern disciplinarian when it comes to too much chewing gum, eating vegetables, and getting little boys to bed at night. And she must have a well-padded shoulder for tears and comfort when a wounded gladiator comes home with sand in his eyes, scratched face, and skinned knees.

She must not only be an expert laundress, but always remember to remove sand and pebbles, and string, and turtles from pockets; and she must be adept at sewing on buttons, letting down and taking up sleeves, and pants legs, and able to patch the threadbare portions. She must be a doctor -- able to remove splinters without pain, stop bleeding noses, vaporize colds, read stories to boys with measles; and always have on hand a supply of bandaids.

A mother must be a naturalist, able to dissect caterpillars, touch squirming worms, and even remove taillights from fireflies. She must be a financial wizard, always able to stretch a meager weekly budget to include new shoes, as well as change to buy ice cream sticks when the Good Humor man comes by ringing his bell. And she must find a birthday present for someone she did not know had invited her sons to a party. She must be a magician and keep a bottomless cocky jar, a constant supply of apples, and cokes for the thundering herd arriving from school at midafternoon. She must be an art critic -- recognizing instantly the scribbled drawing in their hands as the beautiful picture of a man walking down a dirt road with a pan on his head.

She must be agile, as she balances a baby under one arm, and lifts another small boy to her back, while another ties her feet into knots -- all this while she writes a check for the dry cleaners. Regardless of her shape, she must have a lap large enough to hold at least three wiggling, pajama-clad monsters who gradually quiet down, and listen with wonder to the never-failing words: "Once upon a time..."

Her sense of beauty must extend itself to the lovely ferny plant in the dirty hand reached toward her -- even to lifting him high heavenward to gaze at blue eggs in the robin's nest in the sycamore tree. Her payment is rich and full, but often comes in little ways: a wadded bouquet of dandelion puffs; or watching her son share his cookie with a neighbor, and remarking that his mother is the best cook in all the world. Her payment also comes in the cherished words of the Night Prayers -- even in the P.S., "And God bless even Billy who took my train, today..." (Adapted)

You don't remember all these details of her day. But you made life very busy for her. And after all these years it isn't exactly out of order for you to tell her that you appreciate her labors and her love. At Notre Dame we do this best in the Novena for Mother's Day. It begins tomorrow, which is also First Friday. Give her your Mass, Rosary and Communion for the next nine days. It's the best gift you could give.