“THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE…”

Mother’s Day/Festival of the Christian Home/4th Sunday of Easter

SCRIPTURES: Luke 1:26-33, 38, 46-56 & 2 Timothy 1:3-12

KEY CONCEPTS: As we celebrate our mothers today how might the world transform if mothers had more input regarding the welfare & state of the global community?

OPENING COMMENTS:
When I originally selected the sermon title “the hand that rocks the cradle…rules the world”, I was referring to the belief that “Women, particularly mothers, have a decisive influence on the future direction of society because they rear & nurture the next generation.”

Given some of the global events regarding some of our children in Nigeria, how I wish women (especially mothers) did indeed “rule the world”! So, on this Mother’s Day – may we exalt the mothers of this world – that do indeed nurture the future female AND male leaders of our nation AND our world!

WILL YOU PRAY WITH ME? PRAYER:

LITERARY QUOTE:
Former President Jimmy Carter states in his book, A Call to Action, that he believes “the most serious & unaddressed worldwide challenge is the deprivation & abuse of women & girls”, Carter states that this mistreatment of women & girls is "largely caused by a false interpretation of carefully selected religious texts & a growing tolerance of violence & warfare - which unfortunately is exemplified in the actions of the United States – both toward its own female citizens & the global female community.

TRANSITION:
Both of today’s readings offer Biblical insight into the lives of 3 women who influenced their sons (or grandson) in spite of the cultural norms that devalued women & their place in society. Mary, the teenage mother of Jesus, expresses wisdom & gratitude beyond her years in today’s Gospel reading. And in our Epistle reading, Paul commends the influence of Lois’ & Eunice’s faith – both of which benefits Timothy!

GOSPEL READING – LUKE 1: 26-33, 38, 46-56

Though young, Mary was an amazing mother to Jesus. According to the reading from Luke, chapter 1, Mary was:

- **Highly favored by God**: God was with her; she was a person of outstanding moral & spiritual character.
- **Submissive to God**: And even though being pregnant prior to marriage could have cost her Joseph (& potentially her own life); she still said “yes” to God. She became a social outcast & could have been a single mother had Joseph turned his back on her.
- **A woman of deep faith/deeply spiritual**: She sincerely worshipped God.
- **Humble**: She realized her “humble state (Luke 1:48) & realized she was only a girl from Nazareth with no social status.
- **Thoughtful**: She kept the words of the shepherds following Jesus’ birth & pondered them in her heart (Luke 2:19) She reflected on her journey & allowed it to give her strength.

GENERAL APPLICATION:
Somewhere, in each of our lives, there is/was a woman who dared to give us birth. Some of our mothers (& grandmothers) embody the qualities & characteristics of Mary (favored by God, submissive to God, deeply spiritual, humble & thoughtful).

*Many of us are still on the earth as positive & contributing members of society because of our mother’s AND our grandmother’s love!*
EPISTLE READING – 2 TIMOTHY 1:3-12:
Like Timothy…many of us became the men, women & young people we are because of a mother’s or grandmother’s unconditional love & deeply abiding faith. Timothy’s faith was a direct result of his Grandmother Lois & Mother Eunice’s faith! They modeled for Timothy how to be a spiritual man who loved God. What better gift can mothers & grandmothers offer their children & grandchildren than a sincere faith in God – that:
- Provides a spirit of empowerment
- Provides a spirit of love
- Provides a spirit of self-discipline

And if you research the live of Timothy, you will discover that he had an amazing ministry of service & grace. He was sensitive & compassionate. He served God with confidence & humility – which found its roots in the example of his mother & grandmother.

LITERARY QUOTE:
And in closing, I share a somewhat new discovery regarding some potential words from the lips of Jesus (Issa). The quote was found in ancient scrolls found in Tibet & India…there is evidence in the writings that Jesus spent 17 years of his life there…the missing years from the Bible. I DO want to make it clear that most modern mainstream Christian scholarship has generally rejected any travels by Jesus to India. But even if Jesus NEVER traveled to Tibet or India, I can still imagine this story reflects Jesus’ views about women:

An old woman approached the crowd, but was pushed back. Then Jesus said, "Reverence Woman, mother of the universe,’ in her lies the truth of creation. She is the foundation of all that is good & beautiful. She is the source of life & death. Upon her depends the existence of man, because she is the sustenance of his labors. She gives birth to you in travail, she watches over your growth. Bless her. Honor her. Defend her. Love your wives & honor them, because tomorrow they shall be mothers & later - forerunners of a whole race. Their love ennobles man, soothes the embittered heart & tames the beast. Wife & mother-they are the adornments of the universe."

"As light divides itself from darkness, so does woman possess the gift to divide in man good intent from the thought of evil. Your best thoughts must belong to woman. Gather from them your moral strength, which you must possess to sustain your near ones. Do not humiliate her, for therein you will humiliate yourselves. And all which you will do to mother, to wife, to widow or to another woman in sorrow - that shall you also do for the Spirit."

CLOSING:
May we all honor our mothers today! May we be grateful for their love of us & as mothers, may we continue to offer God’s best to our children – by way of God’s spirit of
- Empowerment
- Love
- Self-discipline

And may the world finally realize that our future would be in far better hands if we empowered & entrusted not only our future generation but also the global future to the mothers & grandmothers who “rock the cradles” of our children/grandchildren. Amen!