Mother's Day
Rolling Meadows - 1976

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IN NOMINE JESU

PHILIPPIANS 2: 1-5 "SO IF THERE IS ANY ENCOURAGEMENT IN CHRIST, ANY INCENTIVE OF LOVE, ANY PARTICIPATION IN THE SPIRIT, ANY AFFECTION AND SYMPATHY, COMPLETE MY JOY BY BEING OF THE SAME MIND, HAVING THE SAME LOVE, BEING IN FULL ACCORD AND OF ONE MIND. DO NOTHING FROM SELFISHNESS OR CONCEIT, BUT IN HUMILITY COUNT OTHERS BETTER THAN YOURSELVES. LET EACH OF YOU LOOK NOT ONLY TO HIS OWN INTERESTS, BUT ALSO TO THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS. HAVE THIS MIND AMONG YOURSELVES, WHICH YOU HAVE IN CHRIST JESUS."

If there is one place in the world where people can be expected to be at ONE with one another, it is AT HOME -- in the FAMILY. Yet, it is often right there that LIFE begins to FALL APART. HUSBANDS and WIVES can't look at each other without GLARING. PARENTS and CHILDREN can't talk to each other without QUARRELING..... Eventually, this same thing shows up OUTSIDE THE FAMILY. At WORK and at PLAY, and even in WORSHIP -- they respond with the SAME CRUDENESS and COARSENESS that mark their LIFE AT HOME.

This, of course, is nothing NEW. It is as OLD as ADAM and EVE. MISUNDERSTANDINGS and DISAGREEMENTS have their root, said St. Paul, in the SAME OLD SINFUL NATURE which likes to WRITE ITS OWN STORY -- governed by ITS OWN PASSIONS -- and punctuated by ITS OWN PRIDE.

So ST. PAUL wrote to his friends at Philippi. He knew very well that the PEOPLE of that church were VERY HUMAN. That is to say: THEY WERE NOT PERFECT. The church had its promblems, as it does today. People had their problems, as they do today. People in the church were QUARRELING and FIGHTING. Indeed, there were TWO WOMEN in this

congregation -- EUODIA and SYNTYCHE -- who had been BICKERING, BITING at each other, and trying to BEAT each other..... It was not something ST. PAUL was going to let go unnoticed. "DO NOTHING FROM SELFISHNESS OR CONCEIT," he said, "BUT IN HUMILITY COUNT OTHERS BETTER THAN YOURSELVES. LET EACH OF YOU LOOK NOT ONLY TO HIS OWN INTERESTS, BUT ALSO TO THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS. HAVE THIS MIND AMONG YOURSELVES, WHICH YOU HAVE IN CHRIST JESUS."

This kind of thing BEGINS AT HOME. What people are AT HOME, they will be WHEREVER THEY ARE. Most people do not like to FIGHT and QUARREL -- but they do. For such people ST. PAUL has some very practical advice: "HAVE THIS MIND AMONG YOURSELVES, WHICH YOU HAVE IN CHRIST JESUS."

What is the "MIND OF CHRIST?" It is simply this: "THOUGH HE WAS IN THE FORM OF GOD, HE DID NOT COUNT EQUALITY WITH GOD A THING TO BE GRASPED, BUT EMPTIED HIMSELF, MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION -- actually gave up for the sake of humanity the privileges which belong to Him as God -- AND TOOK UPON HIMSELF THE FORM OF A SERVANT, BEING BORN IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN. AND BEING FOUND IN HUMAN FORM HE HUMBLED HIMSELF AND BECAME OBEDIENT UNTO DEATH, EVEN DEATH ON A CROSS."

THAT'S THE MIND OF CHRIST! With all of HIS GODHEAD and all of HIS HUMANITY, He did not

feel that He had to go around DEMANDING PRAISE and ADULATION. With COMPLETE CONFIDENCE in HIS FATHER, He did not mind BEING A SERVANT at all. He WASHED THE FEET of His disciples -- not just as a SYMBOLIC GESTURE but in ACTUAL FACT -- just at a time when they were at ODDS WITH ONE ANOTHER, determined to OUTDO ONE ANOTHER, intent on OUT-PARADING ONE ANOTHER. Instead of FEATHERING HIS OWN NEST, He was interested in FORGIVING the HUMAN PRIDE that makes FIGHTING AND QUARRELING an everyday thing on the human scene. He was out to BRING PEOPLE AROUND with HIS LOVE -- which carried Him right to a CROSS where He died for the SIN that makes LIFE A LIVING HELL.

The QUESTION for you to answer on this MOTHER'S DAY is this: Do you want your home to be an OUTPOST OF HELL? Or would you rather that it be a LITTLE BIT LIKE HEAVEN -- a place where you can RETREAT and REFUEL to receive DAILY SUPPORT and STRENGTH? ..... If you would rather it be more like heaven, then listen to the apostle's adice: "Don't be conceited. Don't have an exaggerated opinion about yourself. DO NOTHING FROM SELFISHNESS OR CONCEIT, BUT IN HUMILITY COUNT OTHERS BETTER THAN YOURSELVES."

In my PRE-MARITAL COUNSELLING I have couples MAKE A LIST of the things they DISLIKE MOST about their intended marriage partner. In one way or another the answer always comes back: "CONCEIT." CONCEIT knows it all -- is always right -- is always better. It is the thing that gives others the impression: "I am the one! I am great! I am

good! Look at me!"

There is nothing that can bring about ONENESS in a FAMILY as much as a GOOD HEALTHY DOSE OF REALITY. ALL ARE SINNERS -- MOTHER, FATHER, CHILDREN. Try to COVER THAT UP, and you have already started on a BINGE OF CONCEIT..... There is probably NO CONCEIT SO DEVASTATING as RELIGIOUS PIETY -- which PUTS ON AIRS and PARADES ITS VIRTUES as if somehow, by PIETY, people can be SAVED!

When the Bible talks about SALVATION, it is NOT TALKING about SOMETHING YOU CAN DO TO GET OUT OF THE MESS YOU ARE IN. It is ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT GOD -- what HE HAS DONE and CONTINUES TO DO in order to RESCUE PEOPLE from the MESS THEY ARE IN. For this HIS SON "TOOK UPON HIMSELF THE FORM OF A SERVANT AND WAS MADE IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN. AND BEING FOUND IN HUMAN FORM HE HUMBLED HIMSELF AND BECAME OBEDIENT UNTO DEATH" -- even the death of a COMMON CRIMINAL. In that DEATH, God was doing His thing! IN CHRIST, God was "RECONCILING THE WORLD TO HIMSELF, NOT COUNTING OUR SINS AGAINST US."

Now look at HIM! GOD has "GIVEN HIM A NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME, THAT AT THE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH AND UNDER THE EARTH, AND EVERY TONGUE CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER."

That's SOME FAMILY -- the FAMILY OF GOD -- where people in ALL CONFIDENCE call GOD their FATHER. They can do that because they KNOW CHRIST and LIVE WITH CHRIST in their HOMES. They CONFESS that HE IS THE ONE -- the ONLY ONE - around WHOM the WHOLE FAMILY gathers. His Name is JESUS -- SAVIOR -- for which He was not TOO PROUD TO DIE. He FORGIVES and He HEALS. He GIVES HIMSELF to us AGAIN AND AGAIN at the COMMUNION TABLE. He BINDS US TOGETHER in His GREAT LOVE. He shows us HOW "IN HUMILITY to COUNT OTHERS BETTER THAN ourselves."

So let this be not just a "Happy Mother's Day" -- but let this be a "Happy Family Day" -- in JESUS, OUR SAVIOR! Amen.