

**Pastor Roy's sermon from May 13, 2012    Mother's Day    John 15:9-17    I John 5:1-6**

In today's gospel Jesus speaks of friendship with his followers. As his followers, Jesus invites us into friendship.

Who do you think taught Jesus about friendship and about loving God? Maybe his mother, Mary? There is a Greek word for Mary which describes her carrying and giving birth to Jesus. Theotokos. It is formed from two words—theos--God--and tokos--one who births or bears. Bearer of God. Christians have always clung tightly to their belief that Jesus was very much God and very much a man. Neither nature overshadowed the other. Salvation flows from Jesus being both God and man. If Jesus is not God, salvation is doubtful because it isn't strong enough. And if Jesus is not a man, then salvation is irrelevant because only as a human can Jesus conquer death and bring us life.

So, Mary not only gave birth to a boy, she gave birth to God. Theotokos reminds us. . . Mary gave birth to God. What's my point in all of this? As Christians we believe in a God who trusts in motherhood. The God-man Jesus is delivered to us by his mother.

Now what was so special about Mary that she was granted this honor? Over the ages, the church has gone out of its way to enshroud Mary in a special holiness which probably ends up separating us from her and Jesus. If we take the whole of the Scriptures seriously, the key to Mary's specialness is that she was willing to be God's servant. The angel in Luke's account only says, "You have found favor with God." We are not told why or that she was in any way different from others. After her chat with the angel, she says, "Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." She was open. She was willing. She said, "Yes" to whatever it was that God had in mind. That is all we know about Mary, that she considered herself a willing servant of the Lord.

Then she bore our Lord, and raised him to the best of her ability with Joseph as long as he lived. . . They did a mighty fine job. Perfect? Not necessarily. One of a kind mother? Probably not. I would think she had gifts and handicaps like all of us. We would have probably wondered about some of her choices as we do with parents today. Remember the time she and her sons try to convince Jesus to take a break from his relentless schedule? The Scripture implies that they wondered about his sanity or at least his sensibility. Don't we tend to be amazed that Jesus' family would question anything that he would do? But maybe after he told a parable about who is our mother and brothers and sisters—maybe he did take a break after that. Who else could insist that Jesus think twice about anything that he did?

Surely it was Mary who taught Jesus how to be a friend and to value friendship. The typical rabbi didn't invite his disciples to be friends. She also must have taught Jesus to care for the poor and the sick and the hungry, even if they at times were poor and hungry. "There is always someone who is a little poorer and little more hungry than us."

In Mary we learn the power of a mother's heart and courage to change her world one moment, one person at a time. Its no wonder that God put and has always put the future of the planet in the hands of our mothers. A wise choice. Thanks be to God for our mothers. Perfect at times. Imperfect at others, but always trying their absolute best to train, to love, to set a lasting example for their daughters and sons—whether they be related by blood or not. Today we celebrate mothers and all those who have mothered us during our childhood, youth, and adult lives. Mary is our example of openness to serve and willingness to offer herself, to whatever God was calling her, and to do her level-headed best—which is all God ever calls any of us to do. Blessings to you who mother, this day, Amen.