

Mother's Day and Father's Day

A Unique Claim of Love

One of the 20th century's greatest portraits, entitled "The Artist and His Mother," is by the Armenian-American Arshile Gorky. It shows the artist as a boy standing next to his mother who is seated. The portrait conveys a strong sense of anguish, no doubt because we know that the mother died of starvation in his son's arms during a terrible chapter in the history of the Armenian people. Yet, the pain of this horrific fact is somehow transformed into beauty by the genius of the artist. I believe it is love that makes this transformation possible, the love of the boy-artist for his mother – a love that could never die, and that is easily recalled through the power – and despite the pain – of memory.

We saw this kind of love on display earlier this year in the terrible tragedy of the earthquake in Haiti, as parents searched desperately through rubble for their missing children, uncaring of the danger to themselves, or as strangers stepped in to fill the parental void for orphans whose parents were taken in the quake.

These events remind us that love and beauty will always triumph over ugliness and misfortune. They also remind us why parents, and those who have played a parental role in our lives, have a privileged place in our hearts: their claim of love is like no other. That is why we set aside special days to honor them, Mother's Day and Father's Day. If they are deceased, they seem to be restored to vivid life on Mother's Day and Father's Day as memories of their time with us come flooding back. For those parents still with us we feel a renewed sense of gratitude and joy for their presence in our lives.

This year, the Mother's Day Novena is on May 1 – 9, and the Father's Day Novena on June 12 – 20. Although they are not preached Novenas, they will provide rich opportunities for you to honor your parents, or your parents' memory, with spiritual bouquets. There are intention forms attached to this letter. Please complete and return them to us at your earliest convenience. They will adorn the St. Jude altar and be offered in the prayers and Masses of the Dominican Friars of the Shrine. In addition, you will find on the back of this letter reproductions of this year's Mother's Day and Father's Day cards. If you would like to purchase them, please so indicate in the space provided.

We pray that St. Jude intercedes for you that you will enjoy abundant blessings, with hope and love, as you celebrate or remember your parents on **their** special day.

Fr. Martin Walsh O.P.

Fr. Martin Walsh, O.P.
Director

