

# *My Father's House*

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## **Homily for the Women's Cornerstone Retreat May 12-13, 2000**

### **Blessed Art Thou Among Women** **Fr. Bill McCarthy, MSA**

**I**n her truly amazing book, *The Eternal Woman*, Gertrude Von Le Fort states that every woman, like Mary our mother, is called to three essential vocations: that is, to have the single-mindedness and pure heart of a virgin; to have the fidelity and steadfastness of a bride; and to have the love and warmth of a mother.

As we end this Cornerstone Retreat on the eve of Mother's Day, I would like to express my thanks to Sister Bernadette, to Nancy, to all the speakers, and to each and every one of you. This has been a tremendous experience of your growth in union with Jesus and Mary. Mary always leads us, as you know, to Jesus. She is our mother, which means she is the mother of the Christ within us. Like her, each of you bears Christ within your spirit so that you, in union with her and St. Paul, can truthfully say, "I live now, not I but Jesus Christ lives within me."

May you, like Mary, learn always to wait upon the Father, for the Father has a beautiful plan for your life that He reveals step by step, and moment by moment. Just as Mary was blessed for trusting that the Lord's word to her would be fulfilled, so should you be blessed as God's word becomes incarnate in you and is thus fulfilled. God speaks to you all the time through the Church, through signs, symbols, sacraments, and people.

He has spoken to you through so many convincing ways in these past two days. Most intimately and most personally He speaks to you from within through your own thoughts and deepest intuitions. My first suggestion to you is to listen to the Father and go with the flow of those insights and ideas that He places within your own lives.

My second suggestion is that you, like Mary, become women of love. Love is the greatest gift a woman can give. And, of course, there is nothing like a mother's love. For those of you who are women, we congratulate you on the eve of Mother's Day. To think that God would allow, nay rather create it so, that a woman in loving her husband, could co-create with God one of His children ... to realize that she could share the very creative powers of the Godhead – what an awesome privilege is yours. No wonder we salute you on Mother's Day.

Love is your greatest gift, but true love is also your greatest challenge. You are called to love, to try to understand, to think well of others, to serve them, and, yes, to lay down your lives for them. Love is the most powerful force on the planet earth. True love, that type of love that is there in the heart of a Mother Teresa, is almost irresistible.

My third suggestion is that you be devoted to the Eucharist. The Eucharist is supernatural food for a supernatural journey. It is the greatest of all the sacraments and the summit of the Christian life. Christ's transforming presence in the Eucharist does, in fact, transform us into other Jesus' so that we can think as He thinks, love as He loves, and act as He acts.

The fourth thing I would encourage you to do is to spend quality time with each member of your family affirming them, encouraging and loving them. A powerful way to spell love is TIME. And finally, realize that God is counting upon you to be apostles in these last days, to continue across your time and space the redemptive, sanctifying, healing work of Jesus. You are the light of the world. Christ is counting upon each one of you.

A symbol of all of this shall be in the rose we now give you. As we are giving it to you, receive it as an encouragement to love and to spread love. All of this will take, at times, heroic virtue. The days in which we are living have become darker and darker.

Pope Pius XII once said to a group of women the words that I now repeat to you: "The years of World War II and the post-war years have presented and continue to present to women in all parts of the world a tragic picture without precedent. Never, we believe, in the course of the history of humanity, have the events required on the part of women so much initiative, so much daring; in a word, so much heroism. Women old and young have found it necessary to practice more than manly virtue; and more virtue than that which was required of men formerly only in extraordinary circumstances."

So let your light shine forth in the darkness because you are the light of the world.