

Dear mothers, thank you. We need you. I hope that you are honored in the home the little, often unnoticed, things you do to make the home warmer, softer, more inviting for those who live there. “The beauty of a virtuous wife is the radiance of her home” (Sirach 26:16).

In a recent TED talk, Pope Francis called for a “revolution of tenderness.” Tenderness is a love that comes close, that sees and embraces the child, neighbor, the one who is hurting. Pope Francis made it clear that each one of us has a role to play, regardless of one’s gender or place in the family. Yet, I am convinced that mothers have a role of unique importance. I picture the mother kissing a scraped knee; I hear the voice of a mother whose intuition just knows something is out of place; I feel the mother’s hand on the shoulder giving comfort. (But don’t coddle them too much...as members of the family, kids have to make contributions for the good of the family that are proper to their age.) For this revolution of tenderness to come about, it has to be modeled for us. Mothers and fathers are *indispensable* in bringing it about. Much of what you do is a thankless task, but never underestimate the importance of forming an immortal soul from its earliest days. Learn from Mary, the Blessed Mother; her Immaculate Heart is a store of goodness and love that she wants to use to enrich those who honor her.

I thank you, too, for the little (or big) sacrifices you have made for those you love. They are an image of Jesus who loved us and gave himself up for us. This sacrificial love – our Lord’s, yours, mine – is what brings life to our world. Blessings to those mothers who work outside the home – either out of necessity or for personal fulfillment. Women are gifted and talented and we have much to gain from your contributions. Don’t let the additional stresses suffocate tenderness. That is why husband and wife are a team in meeting the needs of a family.

Yes, it is *Mother’s Day*, but I offer a word of encouragement to women who have not received the gift of children and those whose children have left home. Identify the places in your life where you can model tenderness in this revolution of tenderness.

To mothers who bear the unspeakable grief of having lost a child of any age or stage of development: Remember that neither life nor death, no created power, can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Place your beloved child upon the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

To quote the country group, Lone Star: “Every little thing that you do, I’m amazed by you.”