



ACTION GUIDE

MOTHER'S DAY: SECOND SUNDAY OF MAY

INTRODUCTION

Mother's Day is a wonderful opportunity to highlight the beautiful vocation of motherhood and the gift of human life. It calls us to cherish the gift of life that we receive from our mothers and to pray for all women to whom God has entrusted life in a very special way. As we pray in thanksgiving for the gift of mothers, we remember mothers experiencing difficult pregnancies and pray they may find support and encouragement in choosing life for their children.

While Mother's Day is not a liturgical or Catholic observance, many parishes still use this holiday to honor and pray for mothers. The month of May has traditionally been dedicated to Mary, Mother of Jesus. Mother's Day provides an opportunity to pray for mothers while honoring and seeking the intercession of Our Blessed Mother. It is a fitting day to ask God's special blessing on all mothers. (The *Book of Blessings* contains various options.) If expectant mothers are present in the congregation, Mother's Day is also an opportune time to make use of the *Rite for the Blessing of a Child in the Womb*, which offers blessings for the mother and the child she is carrying. (See the action guide for the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord for sample announcements and other ideas for using the rite. It is accessible at respectlife.org/action-guides.)

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In our efforts to celebrate the vocation of motherhood, it is also important to remember that Mother's Day can be a difficult holiday for many people: married couples struggling with infertility; parents who have lost a child; those who have lost their own mothers; couples longing to welcome a child through adoption; and women and men who are suffering because of their participation in abortion. The included homily notes provide considerations for honoring mothers while showing sensitivity and compassion to all who find this holiday particularly challenging.

Simple steps, a sample timeline, announcements, homily notes and an activity are provided to help you highlight the gift of human life in your celebration of Mother's Day. You are encouraged to adapt the following resources to fit the circumstances of your specific parish, school, or ministry. The resources referenced in this action guide can be found at respectlife.org/action-guides, unless otherwise noted.

SIMPLE STEPS

Here is a list of simple steps that you can use in your parish, school, ministry, or home in your celebration of Mother's Day. These steps offer ideas on how to use the provided resources. Each step may not apply to your specific circumstance, but most can be adapted to suit your needs.

1. Consider how your parish can observe Mother's Day.

Many parishes already have some observance of Mother's Day. It may be a special blessing, a reception after Mass, or a May Crowning of Our Blessed Mother. Find out whether your parish already has any plans or regular traditions. Review the Respect Life resources available for Mother's Day such as the *Spiritual Bouquet to Our Blessed Mother* activity that appears later in this action guide and the *Rite for the Blessing of a Child in the Womb* (available by visiting usccb.org/blessing-in-the-womb). Prayerfully consider which resources may work best in your parish, whether there is a way to use them to complement or integrate with your parish's regular observances, and ultimately, what you will be requesting permission to do.

2. Meet with your pastor.

Schedule a time to meet with your pastor to discuss possibilities for observing Mother's Day in your parish. Present your idea of highlighting the gift of human life and the beauty of the vocation of motherhood through this holiday. Explain what ideas you have prayerfully considered, and ask what may be most appropriate for your parish. Ask his permission to move forward. Be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and your pastor throughout your conversation.

3. Make necessary preparations.

Once you have determined how your parish will celebrate Mother's Day, begin making the appropriate plans and preparations. This could include things like submitting bulletin announcements, gathering materials, and assembling a team of volunteers. See the following sample timeline for more detailed steps.

4. Pray for all mothers and all those who find Mother's Day challenging.

No matter how your parish has decided to observe Mother's Day, prayer should be the basis of everything we do. As you plan and prepare, remember to lift up in prayer all mothers and to offer thanksgiving for the gift of human life. We also know that Mother's Day is often a difficult holiday for many, including those who have lost a child, those who have lost or are estranged from their own mothers, and those who are struggling or unable to have a child, among others. Pray that they may be filled with the Lord's peace and comforted by His love on what can be a challenging day.



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