

Mother's Day Homily—May 11-12, 2024 (Deacon Jim)

My mom was one of my biggest prayer advocates while I was studying for the Deaconate. The one thing that she always made me promise her was that when I had the chance to preach on Mother's Day weekend, that I better say something about mothers. Fourteen years later, even though she has gone to eternal rest, I still remember those words and still believe that she is listening.

Last year while I was in Kaukauna, I had the opportunity to preach on Mother's Day. Sometimes you never know if a homily message affects anyone. A couple months ago I received this letter regarding my Mother's Day homily. I wanted to share it because I believe that my mom is still interceding for me and for others. Here is the letter:

Hi Deacon

I've been meaning to reach out to you for some time now. I have a story I'd like to share with you, now that I have had some time to reflect and really understand the journey we've been on.

I live in Little Chute with my husband and our three boys, who at the time of this story were aged 5, 3 and 2.

The Friday before Mother's Day, I unexpectedly found a lump in my right breast. I immediately questioned if it was something I needed to address, or could wait and brush off. I told my husband and we didn't panic or share it with anyone.

Two days later on Mother's Day my entire family (parents, siblings and all of our kids) attended the 10am mass at Holy Cross. I'll never forget the impact my entire body felt when you walked down to start sharing your homily. You mentioned how mom's are selfless, don't always take time for themselves, and then proceeded to share that a while back, your mom felt a lump in her breast, but didn't go in right away. My husband and I immediately looked at each other over the three little heads sitting between us in that pew. In that moment, I doubled down in my heart that I needed to see a doctor.

A few weeks later, we confirmed that I did have stage 1 breast cancer. The lump I found was no issue but by having that checked out, we discovered a large tumor that probably would have been missed otherwise. I underwent a double mastectomy with no reconstruction, had 6 weeks of daily radiation and am on some long term hormone treatment BUT, I am healthy, I am healed and I have never felt closer to God.

I'm not sure if I would have gone in to see a doctor. Maybe I would have, or maybe I would have waited five more years until my mammogram. Maybe they would have felt it at my next regular appointment. I'll never know, but, I do know that you sharing that story in that exact moment anchored me into God, his grace and divine intervention that carried through the months to follow.

I am so glad that God allowed your Mom to see your ordination. And, I hope you know that by sharing your story AND your mothers, our family got to experience a miracle.

So, thank you. You'll never know the impact you had, and the amazing story of faith that I now get to carry and share with others.

**With love and thanks,
Leah Schrage**

That letter really touched me as I hope it did you as well. As I gave thanks to the Holy Spirit for working through me, He inspired me in the early morning hours of Easter morning this year, to write this poem for all moms from my bedside. I wanted to share it with you.

If I Could Create My Mom—by Deacon Jim

If I could create my mom, Where would I start?
God looked at me and instructed me
to begin with her heart

For God said that is the basis for love
and he said to me that He would provide her
with faith from up above

What's next I asked my Lord?
Should I give to my mom to be adored?

He smiled and said give her a sense of humor
and a smile of great joy,
that she will always will laugh
and be filled with fun for her little girl or boy

I asked him what other things should I not overlook,
He guided me to look at His instruction book

He said that is where I help, so my hand he took
and gave me the options of her being
a women of crafts, of adventure or the ability to cook

God said don't worry and don't be full of strife
for he will help with all of those things
For all moms have a little bit of those in their life

I asked the Lord if I could be so bold,
to put something in my mom
so that she would never grow old

But He told me that if I helped create my mom with so much care and love,
that He would want to meet her one day in eternity up above

God said that she would be a creation that He would not want to see die,
So he said when it comes her time to leave,
I will give her eagles wings to fly

To fly up to heaven which is God's gift above

And to always shine down with her motherly love

To continue to watch over you from on high,
and to remind us that one day we will meet again in the eternal sky.

So for those of you mom is still with you today
Make sure to always say thank you without delay.

A small gift of flowers or candy is a good thought they say
But more importantly is your time to call her,
be with her, or take some time to pray.

For all our mothers hold a special place in our hearts
and to always remember her whether together or apart

God looked at me with his heart filled with grace and said,
treasure your mom for that is a creation that you will never replace

Happy Mother's Day