

4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of Lent. 3/17/2021

**Can a mother be without tenderness for the child of her womb?**

Scripture gives us several images for the love of God and his relationship with us. One of the prominent images is God as parent. This is commonly that of a Father, but our first reading gives us a motherly image.

God responds to the cry of the people of Israel when they feel abandoned: Can a mother forget her infant? Be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you.

The womb is, ought to be, the most welcoming place in the world. It is a place of protection, where all the needs of the baby are provided for. Mother and child are

different persons with their own individuality, but they are tightly bound together, sharing the same blood. Long after birth, a connection remains even at the physical level, as we know that cells of the child remain in the body of the mother, and cells of the mother remain in the body of the child.<sup>1</sup>

Each of us is precious in God's eyes, and he cannot forget us. He is always with us, sharing his divine life, even in those times when we don't feel his presence.

In the Gospel we hear another aspect of the parent-child relationship. Jesus observes and imitates what his Father does. This is also natural in our families. Children learn the most basic skills as they spend time with their parents.

They learn the language and culture. They develop

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Martone, "Scientists Discover Children's Cells Living in Mothers' Brains", *Scientific American*, December 2012.

attitudes and patterns of behavior from what they see and experience in the family environment.

What is it that Jesus observes and imitates from the Father? Mercy, concern for every human being, responsibility for the weaker, salvation.

We are beloved children of God in our baptism, members of God's family in the Church. Let us stay close, to learn and imitate the family values, learning from our older brothers and sisters, the saints.

As earthly parents we fall short, but many of us are called by God to be parental figures. He will guide us, if we ask him. Let us ask God to reflect his love through us in those relationships, and place our own children in the hands of the perfect Father.

Today let us give thanks for the great blessing of being children of God, and ask him to strengthen our families with his love.