

My Brothers and Sisters,

Many years ago an engineer described the evolution of her relationship with God. When she was a child, she focused primarily on God the Father because at that time in her life she was completely dependent on her parents, both her father and mother. As an adolescent and young adult, she focused primarily on Jesus because he was human like us and, therefore, went through what we have to go through growing up. Finally, after she was married, she focused primarily on the Holy Spirit because in marriage an *I* and a *you* become a *we* without losing their individual identities.

Today's reading from Hebrews makes her point about Jesus: "*For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin.*" In other words, Jesus is "like us in all things but sin." He is Son of God, truly divine but also truly human. Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "*through his suffering, my servant shall justify many.*" In simplest terms, Jesus is both Son of God and Savior.

Jesus also reveals us to ourselves. My guess is that most people at some point in their life have wanted to be Superman or Wonder Woman. We sometimes metaphorically refer to a person as a superman or a wonder woman. However, today's reading from the Letter to the Hebrews reminds us that weakness is part of the human condition. If Jesus was tested by weakness, we certainly will be tested by weakness. We all have to deal with physical limitations, illness, aging, and eventually death. At times we all struggle emotionally and psychologically. Likewise, we all struggle with temptation. All human life is a gift, but a fragile gift. One of our biggest challenges as human beings, especially as we age, is to learn to accept and live with our weaknesses and limitations.

Both today's reading from Isaiah and today's reading from Hebrews remind us that life that life is not always going to be easy, that life is often going to be challenging. Throughout our lives we have curve balls thrown at us. Many times these curve balls come at times when life seems to be going really well. For example, because parents never stop being parents, when something bad happens in the lives of their adult children, they suffer with their children. However, we grow the most when we confront and overcome challenges.

In the final verse of the Gospel, Jesus said, "*For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.*" In other words, if we want to live well, we have to imitate him, serving and giving ourselves to others. Jesus exemplified this best at the Last Supper when he washed the feet of his disciples, an act of humble service. When he was finished, he told them, "*If I, then, your Lord and Master have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet. I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you...Now that you know this, happiness will be yours if you behave accordingly*" [Jn. 13:15; JB, 1966].

My brothers and sisters, today Jesus teaches us that to live fully human lives we have to accept our limitations, confront our challenges, and serve others generously. However, today is also World Mission Sunday. Today the Church asks us to pray for and to support the Church's missions and the Church's missionaries throughout the world. This includes the many Home Mission dioceses within our own country and the Home Mission parishes within our own Archdiocese. Our prayers and support for the Church's missions and the Church's missionaries are one way we fulfill Jesus' command to go out and proclaim the Gospel to all creation.