

Fr. John Warfel – The 6th Sunday of Easter – May 10, 2026

It happened around Mother's Day
My mother had died the October before
But it wasn't until I saw the Mother's Day card display at the drugstore
That it hit me like a ton of bricks.

I didn't have a reason to buy a Mother's Day card this year.
The lump in my throat told me to move to a different aisle...and quickly
So there amid the dental floss and the toothpaste,
I finally came face to face with it:
Mom was gone.
Grief hits at strange times and in unexpected places, doesn't it?

The mother/child bond is among the strongest of all human relationships
For some it is the longest sustained relationship-
within the span of a single lifetime

No matter how old we are, our mothers remain our mothers
And at some level, they embody a primal sense of security
The place we run for cover, our earliest source of comfort

There are some things that you can only tell your mom
Something that, even if shared with a very dear friend
All you'd get in response would be a stifled yawn-
And perhaps a polite, that's nice.

But not from your mother
Your juicy little piece of news would intrigue, fascinate or even excite her.
I miss Mom the most when I have something to tell her, her alone
And I can't

Regardless of whether our mothers were good, neglectful or abusive
We are indissolubly linked to them
Just knowing that you are someone's little boy or girl
Well... that never quite goes away.

So when Jesus promises his disciples that he will not leave them orphaned
He speaks to the core of their very souls
After all, what is our greatest fear?
Death? No.
Our deepest fear is abandonment.
Psychologists call this separation anxiety.

Despite our rugged American individualism and independence
We are terrified of being abandoned, left alone, all alone in the world

We fear this as children and we fear this as adults

In the section of John's gospel known as the farewell discourse.
Jesus promises not to leave the disciples orphaned
The farewell discourse appears before the arrest and crucifixion

And as with John, this discourse is layer upon layer of systematic theology
But one thing is very clear: Despite the imminent crucifixion,
The disciples would not be left orphaned.