

Mother's Day Sermon: Prayer. 5/9/2010.

Fr. Hugh St. George. Easter 6C

On the local news that evening the police said they did not know where Deborah Kemp found the strength.

34 year old mom Deborah was pumping gas. Her little daughter was asleep in the back seat. Just after she replaced the pump a man pushed her back, jumped into the driver's seat and started up her car.

As the carjacker pulled away Deborah grabbed the door with one hand and the steering wheel with another hand.

She was dragged for several blocks.

She somehow managed to steer the car to the side of the road and onto the grassy edge.

She pulled the man out of the car and beat him with the anti theft car locking device.

A moment later the police showed up. The officers found the situation under control.

Her comment: “I wasn’t trying to be a hero.

I was just concerned for my baby.”

Deborah had torn pants and bloody knees.

The perpetrator, who was familiar to the police from a prior episode, had two broken legs.

The moral of this tale is easy –

Don’t mess with Mothers.

It's a pleasure this morning to tell all of you mothers that you are loved, admired and appreciated; and I speak for all the men of St. George as we wish you a very blessed and Happy Mother's Day.

We have a good number of car lovers in our congregation.

Now many a man has been accused of paying more attention to his car than to his wife.

I came across a proposed maintenance agreement for mothers. It provides for a complete overhaul every seventy thousand miles or every five years, or for every two children, whichever comes first. I leave it to you as to whether this was written by a man or a woman.

The Maintenance Recommendations include:

Fuel:

While most mothers will run indefinitely on hot coffee, a hamburger and some cookies, a regular gourmet meal for two in a romantic setting will greatly improve attitude and efficiency.

Motor: A mother's motor is highly dependable.

Mothers can start from a prone position and reach top speed in half a second at the sound of a single cry from a child.

To keep the motor running at peak efficiency leisurely trips to spas are highly recommended.

Battery: Batteries need regular recharging.

Flowers, chocolates and thoughtful unexpected gifts have excellent recharging capabilities.

Tune-ups: Mothers need regular tune-ups.  
Compliments are very inexpensive and always appreciated. Special vacations every 40,000 miles are extremely effective.

Then there was a whole section on maintaining the chassis. But I am definitely not going to touch that one.

Every month millions of magazines are sold. They have covers designed to entice us to buy.

They promise us that if we follow their easy steps we will have more energy, a better yield on our investments, a blissful marriage, and of course we will be able to look slim, while eating everything we want.

And after all, who doesn't want to have more energy, greater effectiveness and more happiness.

The extraordinary thing is that in contrast to the flimsy promises of the magazine world, many of the more valuable things that we really want in life, like energy, happiness, wisdom and effectiveness are available to us, absolutely free!

We already have the key. It's called prayer.

Every Sunday when we get together, our whole service is prayer. We have prayers for the Church and for people in need.

We have prayers of listening to Scripture and sermons.

We have a prayer of declaration of the faith - the Creed. We have prayers to get us right with God - the confession. [We have prayers set to music - hymns and anthems and songs of praise.]

And finally we present ourselves kneeling in prayerful humility to receive a touch of God's Grace through Holy Communion.

So I invite you to spend a few minutes with me this morning just thinking about your prayer life. Ask yourself how your prayer life is and whether it is adequate.

Some people I speak to have pretty much given up on prayer. - Why would they do that?

Well, some people just fall into a bad habit of thinking, “Now isn’t convenient - I’ll pray later”, but a convenient later never comes.

Some people have a problem with prayer because of some confusion about God.

If you are unsure that God cares about you personally, or if you imagine that God is unconcerned about ordinary people like us – Or, if you’ve ever prayed for something really important and been sadly disappointed, you could conclude that praying is pointless.

Of course the problem is that failing to pray only aggravates the sense of disconnectedness from God.

Prayer is the best way to get to know God more closely. It is the way that God's power is released into our lives.

So if you're not doing it, or if you're just giving it the occasional halfhearted minute, it shouldn't be surprising if you feel out of touch with God.

For many people prayer is still unexplored territory. A lot of people use it like a spare tire – good to know about and be able to use only in case of emergency.

Some people regard prayer as religious in nature and to be used only here in Church.

It's interesting that the greatest scientific mind of the last century, Einstein said:

“The hope of the world is not in the atomic Age, or in science, but in prayer.”

For myself I find it's not that everything always works out wonderfully when I pray, although sometimes it does.

I don't necessarily find that I have a wonderful day when I pray, although sometimes I do.

What I do find is that as long as I am praying I can somehow cope much better with whatever comes my way. And that, come what may, I feel more peaceful inside and closer to God.

I find resources that I might otherwise not have tapped into.

If I slip in my prayer practice I just feel out of sorts. I feel like I've lost my edge.

When you don't pray you feel disconnected – for the very simple reason that you have disconnected yourself from God.

Prayer is a little bit like exercise.

If you don't exercise for a couple of days it's no big deal. But if you don't exercise for a couple of weeks you really notice it.

And if you continue that way for months, it's no surprise that you find yourself badly out of shape.

Many people have bought books on prayer.

I certainly have bought lots of them.

Some of them are truly inspiring.

Some of them are pretty dry and boring, but if you read them last thing at night they do make an excellent cure for insomnia.

Even with reading the books, your prayer life can still feel inaccessible.

Again it's like exercise. It's not about buying more equipment or watching a video.

It's the self discipline to get on with it regularly.

Everyone knows the saying, "Experience can't be taught". That is as true of prayer as it is of anything else.

Prayer is something you learn by doing.

The more we gain access to God through prayer the closer we feel to Him.

We probably all pray for the big things - children and grandchildren making the best of their lives; surviving cancer; getting out of financial trouble.

But we might have reservations about bothering God over the little problems of everyday life.

The small day to day decisions.

But there really are no small decisions.

Every day we are faced with countless decisions that have the potential to take us closer to, or further from God's will.

Who doesn't want more wisdom, or more inner peace, more joy, or more courage?

Prayer can give us all that and much more.

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you whatever habits or thoughts you have, that get in the way of your having the deep and rich prayer life you could have.

If in all honesty you find yourself to be careless or negligent about prayer, confess it this morning when we say the confession.

Then ask God to give you the desire and the resolve to start over with a renewed fuller prayer life.

Prayer is not a chore. It's not a burden.

It is a privilege and a fabulous opportunity that no-one in their right mind should pass up.