

# Editorial: The indispensable role of Catholic moms

St. Zélie Martin, the mother of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, once wrote of raising five daughters: “I long for rest. I have not even the courage to struggle on. I feel the need of quiet reflection to think of salvation, which the complications of this world have made me neglect.”

This sentiment expressed by the saintly wife and mother is a reminder that the struggles that come with the vocation of motherhood – no matter who the mother – are many and real. To this even, and especially, our Blessed Mother can attest. One thinks of the sword of sorrow piercing her heart at Jesus’ presentation; of the panic and fear felt while she and Joseph frantically searched for him at age 12; and, of course, of witnessing his excruciating crucifixion. For all of its joys, motherhood brings with it its share of crosses. Such is the blessing and curse of unconditional love.

[In a general audience in January 2015](#), Pope Francis acknowledged the many challenges that come with saying “yes” to the vocation of motherhood, and he encouraged a deeper understanding and empathy of their daily realities.

“Perhaps mothers, ready to sacrifice so much for their children and often for others as well, ought to be listened to more,” he said. “We should understand more about their daily struggle to be efficient at work and attentive and affectionate in the family; we should better grasp what they aspire to in order to express the best and most authentic fruits of their emancipation. A mother with her children always has problems, always work.”

Motherhood in the 21st century brings with it its own special set of challenges, as is examined in our recent story by

Michelle Martin. In addition to the not-so-simple task of raising kids to understand and appreciate the Faith, mothers now are faced with a culture that is antithetical to many Christian values, that is full of technology that both distracts and tempts, and that operates at a breakneck pace.

“I think the world has become a scary, scary place for children, and I think the world has become a scary, scary place to raise children,” Marcia Segelstein, author of [“Don’t Let the Culture Raise Your Kids,”](#) says in the piece.

Despite these challenges, though, mothers also serve as a vital part of the antidote – and this is where they can find encouragement and hope.

“Mothers often pass on the deepest sense of religious practice: in a human being’s life, the value of faith is inscribed in the first prayers, the first acts of devotion that a child learns,” Pope Francis continued in his general audience. “It is a message that believing mothers are able to pass on without much explanation: these come later, but the seed of faith is those early precious moments. Without mothers, not only would there be no new faithful, but the Faith would lose a good part of its simple and profound warmth.”

As we celebrate Mother’s Day this year, take heart, all you moms. Like St. Zelig, there will be times of struggle. Like Mary, there will be times of sacrifice and pain. But you play an indispensable role in the life of your children.

“A society without mothers would be a dehumanized society, for mothers are always, even in the worst moments, witnesses of tenderness, dedication and moral strength,” Pope Francis said.

And when in doubt? Remember, others have been there.

“Love Our Lady,” St. Josemaria Escriva wrote in “The Way.” “And she will obtain abundant grace to help you conquer in

your daily struggle.”

*OSV Editorial Board: Gretchen R. Crowe, Scott P. Richert, York Young*