

Homily for Mother's Day
May 11, 2008
Brandon Rivera

Good morning everyone, and Happy Mother's Day all of the moms.

Well, for those of you who are unfamiliar with the Mother's day service here at Grace Church, every year the church will ask one of the high school seniors to give the homily for the family service. When I was asked a few weeks ago, initially I was excited and very honored to be chosen. But after I thought about it I began to have second thoughts. I was nervous, and asked myself what in the world will I talk about? But soon after that, the light bulb went on in my head and it hit me, "wow I have been a member of Grace Church for 13 years." There have been so many lessons I have learned sitting in this room. Now, with college approaching, I have been reflecting on all the values I've learned here, and how important it is for me to bring them with me as I move on to the next stage in my life.

Growing up, my mother Barbara, my father Ed, and my older brother Eddie, who couldn't be here today because he is at school in Michigan, would often come to church and on the way home we would discuss the importance of the lessons in the gospel for that day. As a child, my brother and I didn't always understand the messages in the readings, with the big words that are hard to pronounce, and the complicated prose of the bible. So my mom would explain it to us in simpler terms, such as "always give back

Homily for Mother's Day
May 11, 2008
Brandon Rivera

to those that have helped you” and the importance of forgiveness. At that age, it didn’t mean much, because all we cared about was running around outside playing sports or Nintendo. But now, as a teenager/young adult, the words and lessons from the readings and the gospel carry a completely different value. Unfortunately, being a teen makes it a lot more difficult to take the lessons I have learned in church and integrate them into my everyday life. High school is tough, and there are many temptations, but that is where the moms and dads come in. My parents have gone out their way to make sure that I understand what it is to do the right thing; whether it be waking me up for church every Sunday, even when I put up a fight after a late Saturday night, or constantly drowning my ears with the importance of faith, responsibility, morals, love, and forgiveness. Often I would get annoyed with the motherly advice, because at times I thought they sounded like a broken record, and us teenagers think we know everything. But looking back on it now I am appreciative and grateful for it, because on more than one occasion in the past four years I have been in a situation, in which I have made the right decision because of one of those “broken record” statements my parents have imbedded into my head or something

Homily for Mother's Day
May 11, 2008
Brandon Rivera

that Father Pat said in a homily from the previous Sunday that stuck in my head all week.

But come August, I will be moving into my dorm at the University of Florida, and I will not have my parents in my ear everyday or the chance to come to Grace Church and learn something new every Sunday. For many of you who don't know, I played football in high school and it is my favorite sport (Go Giants!). It is unique from other sports because there is only one game played a week. We spend all week practicing, strategizing, and preparing for one team, such as studying their players and watching game film. When Friday night comes around, we have prepared as much as we could, but it comes down to executing on the field. In a way, that's how I see the situation for all the high school seniors in my position. We are the players, and our parents, church members, and teachers are the coaches. You have equipped us with all the right tools and knowledge to be good Christians and people, now it is just up to us to get the job done.

Looking around the church every Sunday, I always see new faces and children, which reminds me how much I have grown and learned in this church. And it is up to us a the congregation to continue the beautiful cycle of teaching, learning, and growing with the help of God and each other.

Homily for Mother's Day
May 11, 2008
Brandon Rivera

I would like to thank everyone at Grace Church for teaching me to be a good Christian, and helping me start an early relationship with God. And I would especially like to thank all of the mothers out there. I know we can be difficult sometimes, maybe even make you want to pull your hair out, but I know I speak for all the children in here when I say we appreciate everything you do for us, and we are always listening to everything you have to say, even though we often act like it goes in one ear and out the other. So, Happy Mothers Day Mom. Thank you for everything, I Love you very much.