

To Moms who are struggling:

Have you ever been tempted to say "enough" with this mothering thing & babies & all the sacrifices we make fulfilling our vocation? By the grace of God, I am typically very happy with my life as a Mom. However, yesterday I had some unsettling thoughts. Let me tell you the story. My Mom watched my younger two boys in the afternoon while I went to host a party for my oldest son's class. It was wonderful & I was thankful for the opportunity. However afterwards I began to think, "Oh that was so nice. Maybe I should start getting a babysitter all the time. And maybe I should get a job so I can have a change of pace. And maybe we should just be done having babies because really, I could be doing so many other fun things. Oh, and then I could have a quiet car again, and money to go shopping more often, and wouldn't my life be so much better. Because this carrying babies around everywhere I go is really hurting my back. And constantly negotiating with a toddler is a bit old. And why? Why do I do this anyway?" Do you see where I was going? Ok, so you may or may not have had a conversation with yourself like this, but I think it is fairly normal. And I have to say this is not a commentary on working vs non-working Moms as I have done both. This is a commentary on motherly feelings & the desire to run away...particularly from what God is calling me to do which is to be actively engaged in my mothering.

Like I said, I am typically counting my blessings that I can be with my kids. And I often advertise to others about how much I genuinely love it. However, it is not always easy and some days I think anything would be better.

Now enter today's gospel from Matthew 9:35-38:

"Jesus went around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, and curing every disease and illness. At the sight of the crowds, **his heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd.** Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest." (emphasis mine)

I have often heard this verse preached in conjunction with priestly vocations. I would say that is the primary use for this verse as it is followed by the summoning of his Twelve disciples and giving them authority. However, as a married woman & mother I asked, "God, how are you speaking to me?" And in my prayer today, Jesus spoke to my heart and asked me to continue my labor as a mother. Yes, mothering is hard work. Yes, it is often full of unending labor. But it is what God is asking me to do. It is one of the most important things that I can do--help raise up a soul. I feel that Jesus looks at many children in our society with pity because they are troubled and abandoned...not physically but spiritually and emotionally. In a world that is so busy and emphasizes materialism, independence, and selfish desires, that is the natural result--children and people that are troubled and alone. I know my family falls victim to this as well. It is so easy to want to do everything else, anything else, other than the labor that God asks us to do. At this age & stage in my life, God is asking me to focus on mothering the children I have and being open to other children as He desires. My human nature often wants to resist this, but when I read the sweet words of the Gospel and feel the Holy Spirit stirring in my heart all I can do is say, "Yes, Lord! I will labor for you. That our Church may have the fruit of holy souls ready to serve You and follow You, rather than being like sheep without a shepherd. And yes, Lord, I will ask for more priestly laborers as well. Take them from my family if you wish!" So pray for me and I will pray for you, that we can all be faithful to our vocation as wives and mothers in just way the Lord is asking us to live it out.

Praise be to God. St. Ambrose, today on your Feast Day and always, pray for us!

-Katie