

Homily for 6th Sunday of Easter

It was a Friday afternoon. The place was Indiana. A tornado was thundering across the plains. A mother gathered her two children (8 and 5 years old) and brought them to the basement of the three-story-house. The mother huddled them under a comforter and lay her own body on top of them. The 175-mile-per-hour storm hit like a freight train, leveling the house.

The children were fine but the mother could not move. She knew she was severely injured. She texted a loving goodbye message to her husband, a teacher at the local high school. The little boy ran for help and a neighbor rushed over and found the mother in the rubble. Both her legs had been severed. The neighbor fashioned two tourniquets to stop and bleeding and she was rushed to a hospital.

When she woke up after surgery her husband told her, “The kids are here because of you. You’re going to be here for your kids and you get to see them grow up..

The mother would recover from the injuries and was walking on prosthetic limbs in a few months.

Stephanie Decker, the mother in our story, says she is not a hero, just a mother.

This story, reported in March on the Today Show, is a fitting reflection both on today's Gospel and second reading as well as our celebration of Mother's Day.

The call from the Word of God to love one another is a call to live love not in words but in deeds. The command to "love one another" does not ask for inspirational words, but for concrete actions which empowered by God's love are lived out in our love.

On this Mother's Day we honor a group of women for whom love is not only a matter of words but even more so of actions. The example of Stephanie Decker is not so much unique as it is a reflection of the love that every mother, that our mothers, have for their children.

May we who honor our mothers today never fail to thank them for making the command to "love one another" a reality in our day-to-day living. May the love and gratitude we show our mothers today be a reflection of the love and gratitude we should give them every day of our lives.

And may those of us who today can only remember the great gift of our mother's love, pray that what they gave to us in the past be the love we give to others in the present.