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A Mother's Day Reflection

By Todd Carpenter, OFM

Mother's Day is always a celebratory event at Hispanic parishes. In all my assignments, we have invited mothers to come into the sanctuary, face the congregation and receive a special blessing along with a small gift from the parish. Oftentimes, mothers are treated to a dinner or party after Mass.

This year, I had to opportunity to visit the maternity ward of a local hospital, on the eve of Mother's Day, to visit a parishioner named Carmelina, who just delivered her first child. I can't think of any better time to be in a maternity ward than Mother's Day weekend.

As soon as I walked into Carmelina's room, she thrust her beautiful newborn boy, Giancarlo, into my arms, saying: "Father Todd, take him!" I said, "Are you sure? I'm rather clumsy. I might break him."

But once I took him, I didn't want to give him back! What a blessing and privilege to hold baby Giancarlo — only 2 days old — in my hands.

Each Mother's Day, I recall the words of a special friar, **Paul Carnicelli, OFM**, who is now deceased. In 1993, as a novice in Brookline, Mass., I visited Paul each week while he was receiving dialysis. One day he told me, "Todd, always remember and cherish your mother. There is nothing like the love a mother."

How true that is. While I could not get home this year to see my mother, we did talk on the phone.

Happy Mother's Day to all our wonderful and dedicated mothers who have done so much for us!

— Fr. Todd is pastor of St. Paul's Church in Wilmington, Del.