

Holy Trinity 2014A

The Fatherhood of God

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity. On this weekend, we also celebrate Father's Day. Although these two celebrations rarely occur on the same day, there is an intimate connection between them. On the one hand, Father's Day celebrates the blessing of fatherhood, that gift whereby a man becomes responsible for another human life. On the other hand, the Feast of the Holy Trinity celebrates the mystery of God's fatherhood. For, on this day we proclaim that the one God is a trinity of persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Although we call God "Father," God is neither male nor female. God is mysterious and beyond our human understanding. We address God as "Father" because the Son of God has taught us to call his Father "our Father." We call God "Father" through the power of the Holy Spirit who enables us to call God "our Father." So what does the fatherhood of God teaches us about what it means to be a human father?

In today's first reading, God appears to Moses and describes Himself in this way: "The Lord, the Lord, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity." God is mercy and grace because God is rich in kindness and is always faithful. Although God is offended by sin, God is slow to anger, always ready to forgive.

Here is a perfect description of how every human father should act toward his children and within his own family. The measure of a father's strength is his willingness to be merciful and compassionate. The measure of a father's goodness is his ability to be kind and forgiving. The measure of a father's manhood is his ability to control his anger.

In today's second reading St. Paul calls God the God of peace and love. God is peace because God reconciles us to Himself. God is love because God shows His love in the death and

resurrection of his Son. To live in God is to live in love and peace. To live in God is to be in love with God and at peace with each other.

What Saint Paul writes here presents us with another challenge of what it means to be a father. A good father enables his family to live in unity and harmony. A good father enables his family to live in love. A good father provides his children with an example of love. The measure of such a father is the love and peace he brings to his family.

Finally, Jesus says that God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world but to save it. And so, He sends his Son to show us the way to eternal life.

What St. John writes here provides us with another way of looking at what it means to be a human father. For while there are times when fathers must correct and reprimand their children, there is no place for condemning one's child. While there are times that children do what is wrong, the gracious and merciful father finds a way to correct and reprove without violence or anger.

The Fatherhood of God teaches us three things. First, a strong father is kind and merciful. Second, a good father brings peace and love to his family. Third, a wise father never condemns and rarely judges.

I congratulate all of the men of our parish today: you who are biological fathers and you who are fathers to the young in so many other ways. For when you exercise your fatherhood in mercy, love, and restraint, you show us what it means to call God "Our Father."