

Eleventh Sunday of Ordinary Time: Some Father's Day Thoughts

The readings for this Sunday present the People of Israel encamped before Mount Sinai. God tells Moses, "Remind the people of my care for them, how I defeated the Egyptians and bore up the People of Israel on eagles wings and brought you here to myself. Paul reminds the Romans of God's special care for his people when he tells them and us that Jesus died for us, so that we, enemies of God's kingdom through sin, might be reconciled with God. The just man died not just for good people, but even and especially for sinner. The Gospel reading presents the Lord filled with grief when he saw how much the crowds need him and how few people there were to continue his work. Jesus then begins the Apostolic Church. He calls the Twelve apostles to carry his presence to the world.

This Sunday is Father's Day. All Fathers, birth fathers, adoptive fathers and priests, are reminded of their mission to bring the caring protective love of the Lord to their families.

There have been both negative and positive concepts regarding Fathers in our papers recently. On the negative side, there is a direct relationship between the number of homes without fathers and the number of children who are in trouble with the law. The legalization of abortion has become the greatest anti-woman action of the century. Many future fathers tell the girls they have impregnated that they have no responsibility beyond the providing of the fee for an abortion. Those courageous girls with the moral integrity that will not allow themselves to be compromised are treated as though it was their choice to have a fatherless child.

On the positive side, many men are taking fatherhood very seriously. Fathers are taking an active role in their families. Movements like the *Diocesan Men's Conference*, *That Man is You*, and the *Promise Keepers* have encouraged thousands of fathers to take an active role in the spiritual and moral leadership of their families.

Back in 1993 the Bishops of the United States issued a pastoral message, *Follow the Way of Love*, in which fathers were commended and encouraged. The bishops wrote:

More and more, fathers have been discovering how their involvement in parenting enriches both their children and themselves. This is a hopeful development. We urge men to interpret their traditional role of provider for a family in more than an economic sense. Physical care of children, discipline, training in religious values and practices, helping with school work, and other activities can and must be provided by fathers as well as mothers.

The role of the mother can be expressed with the concept of being the life-giving-nurturer. The nurturing which her body gives the child from conception through nursing becomes her basic relationship with her child. The good mother does not just teach her child like the school teacher, she feeds her child the basic messages of life.

The role of the father can be expressed with the concept of being the life giving

provider. Work is important, but providing for the family means a lot more than a pay check. The good father provides a Christian life for the child to grasp integrate into his or her life.

The good father makes real the caring, protective love of the Lord. On eagle's wings the Lord delivered his people from the evils of Egypt. When he keeps his home free from the immoral influences of modern society, the good father protects his children from the evils of the world with eagles wings. He cares for his children with the sacrifice of his day knowing that his life is richer when it is given for others, particularly for his own family. The good father is sent to proclaim the Gospel of Christ, and he begins with his children.

We pray for our Fathers. May they continue to be good fathers. May they provide for our children the care of the Father of us all.