

My Walk With God
Fatherhood



Ch XIV

What does it
father? God,
all is the perfect
His creation with

Mind, and all His Might, to the point of giving the life of His very own Son for us, even while we are still sinners. His only requirement is that we Love Him and give Him the respect due Him for His Sacrifice. The question is 'Hows do I do that? In my own earthly family, do I willingly give of myself, in time and with love to them? Am I willing to give my very life for my families well-being? I cannot tell you how many times that I have failed as a father. In recognition of this failing, I have had the honor to seek forgiveness from God, and from my family for these failings, with the anticipation that I, un-deservingly might be forgiven. In Confession, God Our Father forgives us when we are repentant, and we as fathers, must do the same, if we deserve to be acting as real fathers to our children. All of humanity, of course, has that obligation. If we are to be forgiven, we too must learn to and act to forgive each other. This may be the most difficult of Christian Principles.

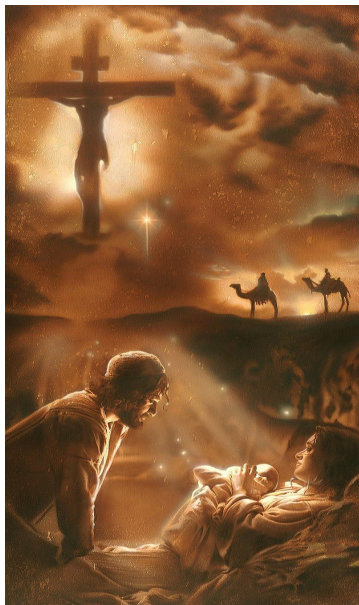
mean to be a
being the Father of
example. To love
all his Soul, all His

As a child, I recall going to confession each time prior to receiving Communion. Confession was not only for Mortal sins but for Venial sins as well. When did we, as a society, fall away from that practice? For me it was when I was about 13 years old

and my family moved from Rhode Island. Later on it seemed that the Church condoned this practice as Confession was no longer stressed as a needed practice prior to receiving The Body of Christ. No one ever said that but it was implied with less hours being available for Confession each week. By 1988, while there were 3 priests at our parish, only 1 would be hearing confessions each week for about 45 minutes on a Saturday. There was a notice in the parish bulletin that appointments could be made for confession with the parish office. This seemed to remove the privacy function of the confessional for the penitent.

In order to hear as many confessions as possible during this reduced availability, many priests asked that we stick to the fundamentals of confession only the specific mortal sin that we might have committed. This led to the idea that venial sins need not be mentioned during confession. After a while, even the definition of Mortal became blurred.

As a father, I fell into the trap. I no longer stressed the need for confession, into my youngest daughter by approaching confession as a family, therefore I was not serving as an example for the need to confess my sins regularly, or even conveying the seriousness of sin within my family. Throughout this time my wife and I, did however, seek to support our family, and the larger community of our parish, with my daughter's school and other activities of the youngsters in the parish youth programs.



While endeavoring to do what is in the best interest for the life of my family, I had tried to consider the effect that my own life would have upon them. Where could I get an example of fatherhood that would meet all of the criteria for a successful family. Where do I find the most successful family in history, and would that be a feasible example? The Holy Family

and the Family of God comes to mind. It is somewhere between, difficult and impossible, to imagine the fortitude and faith that it would take to raise one's son for the express purpose of providing that he would achieve his purpose in a young death, the ignominious death of condemnation as a public spectacle. God our Father did just that and more. Those who crucified His Son were the very ones that God, in His love, strove to save from their sins. Is this what fatherhood means? I can never match up. Of course, God, in his timeless infinite knowledge, is aware of His Son's intended Resurrection and Salvation given for all men, but that didn't make the sacrifice any less difficult. He still knew that many of humanity would not accept Jesus's sacrifice, and would actually mock Him for it. It is through the love that God has for His creation that He maintains our existence while we look to find Him and His forgiveness.



As God gives us time in which we might grow and learn to live in His love and forgiveness, we too must give our own children time to grow, and within their own free will, seek out their own place in this material world while eventually they might acknowledge their need for God and His Holy Spirit. In my own life, time is running out. Time with which I might seek out God for myself and my wife, as with all of us, time is running out, for we know not the place or the hour when we will come to the end of time. Then, our state and fate, will be sealed and our eternity that we have selected for ourselves will begin.

We all fail to completely reflect the love of God in our lives. My calling is to do the best I can and when I fail, renew my efforts to always live in the will of God. The question is, and has always been, how do I do that? It is a lifelong struggle in perseverance that we pursue this answer. In my recent life my wife has been the

greatest help for me in the pursuit of this goal.

Music has always been the key to my spirituality. Not that I have any talent in this matter, but I have always loved the connection that I feel when the music conforms to the situation at hand, such as in the Liturgy. While stationed in Australia I felt the need to bring music into the Sunday Mass where it was absent in the Navy Chapel on base. After retiring from the Navy and returning to San Diego, we attended



Immaculate Heart Of Mary Parish in Ramona, CA. My daughter had become somewhat proficient in simple guitar accompaniments and we started providing music at one Mass on Sunday mornings. With no published music at this parish we relied on the memories of music from our childhoods. Some other parishioners provided suggestions and I put guitar chords to those we could remember the melodies for. We tried to incorporate Some of the newer music that we had learned while at St. Catherine Laboure in San Diego also but some of this music seemed to be written expressly for a performance venue and not for Liturgical use. By default I became the selection committee of one, while seeking the guidance of our pastor. It was 1976 and the secular age of DISCO and young people came to join our group but were disappointed when their preference of musical style was not incorporated. At first their participation died away but I found that after we left the parish, they became the root of the growth of liturgical music in the parish.

In November of '78, upon our move to Arizona, we took up music liturgy at Our Lady of The Snow Parish in Taylor. Fr. Quintana was very interested in music and was an exceptional organist. In such a poor parish, he had only a very small electric organ in the back of the church where you could hear him playing on weekday afternoons. Our small parish had no other organist so we were prevented from having organ based music during Mass. We also had an old upright piano in the corner that was played by

one lady who had had some music training. Her husband sang with us as we tried to lead music at Mass. Every Thursday and Saturday evening I would choose music from the Glory And Praise Hymnal for consideration by our pastor, who would give his approval or suggest other options. I can't recall how I became the one who seemed to anchor this group but we continued helping wherever we could throughout our time in Taylor and at Our Lady Of The Snow Parish.

We were by no means, a professional sounding group but, I gained a respect for those who pursue the music ministry as a calling. Whatever music was selected, I tried to ensure that the selection aided the congregation in their experience at Mass, for whatever season we were in at the time. We were in luck by having the complete “Glory & Praise” song books to select from, as there were many selections from the Psalms that were adaptable to the Mass in most seasons. Some of the things that I learned concerning music ministry, while at prayer , in my walk with God were.

First: When we sing, we pray twice.

Second: Always remember that we are providing an aid to the congregation in their worship of God at Mass.

Third: The selections should be easy to follow by the people.

Forth: In any hymn there are two main components, the lyrics that provide a connection to the intellect, and the music, that provides a connection to the spiritual being of the people who sing or hear the hymn. It is therefore necessary to make selections for the Mass, whose words enhance the understanding of what is taking place, or is about to take place on the altar. The musical melodies, tempos and arrangements should reflect the mood signified by the season and the parts of the particular Mass itself, in which the piece is to be sung.

Fifth: Keep in mind that the Sacrifice of The Mass is about what Jesus has done for us, not what we are or might do for Him.

Sixth: Musical accompaniment at Mass is not for the entertainment of the congregation, it provides a window into the spiritual dimension that we should aspire to, where we might meet God in the Mass.

Seventh: All of these conditions must be considered in prayer, when writing new music or selecting those pieces with which to enhance the spiritual atmosphere of the congregation at Mass. Special consideration must be taken to ensure that tempos and melodies are not selected for the entertainment of the congregation or the edification of the performers of the music.

As a father, I needed to be concerned that I would pass my learning on to my children, for that is what is important to ensure that the path is laid for the spiritual growth and benefit of one's children. It is then up to them to choose the road with which they will travel, in their quest for God.