

There is a story about a sea captain who in his retirement skippered a boat taking day-trippers to various Islands in the ocean. On one trip the boat was full of young people. These laughed at the old captain when they saw him saying a prayer before setting out, because the day was fine, and the sea was calm. However, they weren't long out at sea when a storm suddenly blew up, and the boat began to pitch violently. The terrified passengers came to the captain and asked him to join them at prayer. But he replied, 'I say my prayers when it's calm. When it's rough I attend to my ship'.

Is there not a lesson for us here? If we cannot or will not seek God in the still moments of our lives, we are not likely to find him when trouble strikes. We are more likely to panic. But if we have learnt to seek him and trust him in the quiet moments, then most certainly we will find him when the going gets rough.

Life can be compared to a voyage. The life of a Christian is not meant to be a solo voyage. We journey with our own fellow Christians, and we support each other in times of difficulty. In the gospel today Jesus told the disciples to cross over to the other side of the lake. Then a storm broke out and the waves were breaking into the boat so that it was almost sinking. But he was in the stern, sleeping, with his head on a cushion. They woke him and said to him. '*Do you not care? We are going down!*' And he woke up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea: '*Quiet now, be calm! And the wind dropped, and all was calm again.*' Then he said to them: 'Why are you so frightened? How is it that you have no faith?

Are we not also like this too at least sometimes? When the storms come into our own lives like a tragedy – a severe sickness, a sudden death of a loved one, an unexpected unemployment etc. maybe we think that God doesn't care. But he is always there even if he doesn't seem to be. Perhaps he doesn't answer our prayers in the way that we want or ask but our faith tells us that he is surely with us giving us the courage, strength, and perseverance that we need.

If we have faith, we will not doubt that he is with us, and we will turn to him in prayer and know his help. The story challenges us to trust in God's power especially when storms assail us. When we have faith, we give up the need to be in control.

Today the nation celebrates Father's Day. It is important to talk about our fathers and their role in the family. Father's Day reminds us that despite all the changes in society, in spite of soaring divorce rate in the world, the father remains a very essential figure **for the family, for the church, and for the nation**. A family is made up of father, mother, and child.

Every child has a right to have a mother and a father. One most hurt by a divorce is often not the man or the woman but the kids. Kids need fathers just as they need mothers. They need their fathers as role models as much as they need their mothers. Pope Francis has dedicated this year to St. Joseph, the father of the Holy family. We need to look to St. Joseph for inspiration.

- **First, the role of the father is to connect with God.** This is what St. Joseph did in his life. Children who have experienced the kindness and love of an earthly father find it easier to accept God as a heavenly father. On the other hand, children who have had sad experiences find it difficult to reconcile the idea of a heavenly father who is merciful, loving and ever ready to listen. If the father is overly critical then that child grows to see God as judgmental. If a father is neglectful then the child concludes that God does not care. If, on the other hand, dad is supportive, loving, and attentive then the child grows to see God as their intimate and caring Heavenly Father.
- **Secondly, the role of the father is to connect with his family.** I think that we can affirm this morning that fathers are called upon to be nurturers. It is not enough for dads to be the breadwinner. You need to help with the nurturing as well. We must look to Joseph, Jesus' father. When Jesus was born his father was present. When Jesus suddenly disappeared in Jerusalem at the age of twelve, we are told that both parents were frantically searching for him. Joseph was certainly no detached father. We can certainly assume that Joseph performed the traditional task of the Jewish father and took Jesus to Jerusalem for the three weeklong festivals. And the very fact that Jesus later assumed his father's profession lets us know that Joseph must have spent many hours with Jesus patiently teaching him the skills of the trade.
- **And third, the role of the father is to connect with his Church.** There are many ways that a man can be connected to his church. I would rather concentrate on the main role of the church and how a father can convey that role at home. The primary role of the church is to be a channel of God's grace in this world. Now, it seems to me, that the father is that channel of love and care for his family.

Though life may be cruel, God gives fathers everything they need to raise their children well. He gives them **hands that can create and can comfort**. He gives them **mouths to speak words of encouragement** and instruction. He gives them **eyes and ears to see and hear** the good. Yet, the same hand that can console can also strike. The same mouth that can speak words of blessing can also curse. The same eyes and ears that seek out the good in a child can close themselves to everything but the bad. God has given fathers all the tools they need, but fathers must still use those tools properly.

But being a father also means hearing a child tell you that they love you. It means coming home to a hug after a long day of work. It means the pride that you feel in the accomplishments of your sons and daughters and the pride you get in sharing those accomplishments with others. **It means choosing to create life.** God bless those fathers who are doing good for their children. Those fathers who have not just shown duty but love. If you want to touch the future beyond your own life, the best way to do it is to be a loving parent.