

Cycle B 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Sunday June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Ministering in agricultural communities for 4 years was truly a blessing to me, as I learned a lot about the people and the art of farming. Farming is hard work. The farmer prays for favorable weather. The soil has to be prepared with manure, fertilizers, and tilling. The planting of the seeds has to be done at the right time. The farmer prays for favorable weather. During the growing season the farmer monitors the fields, treating for weeds, and checking for fungus. The farmer prays for favorable weather. The farmer has to be patient until the crops are just right for harvest. At harvest time the farmer continues to pray for favorable weather. Neglecting any one of these steps, especially prayer, will result in a poor harvest. Farmers are people of faith.

Farming and fatherhood are similar. Both require faith. Both require prayer. Fathers are seed planters. Fathers sow seeds of faith in their children. Farmers produce a harvest for this world. Fathers produce a harvest for the Kingdom of God. As farming is hard work, fatherhood is even harder work.

Jesus speaks to us today about seeds of faith. Jesus often spoke parables that utilized agricultural images in order to teach about the beauty of the Kingdom of God. This is because nearly every hearer of Jesus would have grown some kind of grain or fruits or vegetables to provide for their family and to sell at market.

Jesus taught, that the farmer **scattered the seed on the land, but how it grows he does not know**. Fathers in planting the seeds of faith in their children do not know exactly how God's grace will act in the lives of their children. The father knows though, that it is God Himself who will gather the harvest. The duty of the father is to plant the seeds of faith and to cultivate and **protect** the faith life of his children.

In our time we are seeing a crisis of fatherhood in culture and society. Sociologists are now saying that we have become a fatherless culture. Masculinity in our time has been emasculated. We have males going into their 30's and they are boys not men. In order for men to be good husbands and fathers they must be men of prayer. If we do not know how to pray how can we have a relationship with Jesus and then share that relationship with others. It needs to come from fathers to teach boys how to respect women and respect sexuality. Fathers by their example teach their daughters about the good characteristics a future husband ought to have.

St Joseph is the model for all husbands and fathers. He **protected** and cared for the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Christ Child. He also taught Jesus how to work with His hands. When we read Scripture carefully it tells us that Joseph was a righteous man. As a faithful Jew this means he was first a man of **prayer**. This is why I would like to see, prominently in our church, a statue of St. Joseph Universal

**protector** of the Church holding the Christ child. This statue helps to teach us about the importance of men being good husbands and fathers. Fathers do not act alone in this life. Children need both mothers and fathers actively raising their children together. Parents form their children spiritually, socially, psychologically and physically. In the Rite of Baptism the blessing of the father makes clear the importance of mothers and fathers as these words are prayed over the father:

**God is the giver of all life, human and divine. May he bless the father of this child. He and his wife will be the first teachers of their child in the ways of faith. May they be also the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what they say and do, in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

St. Paul today gives us wisdom that is profitable for fathers and all of us. He tells us twice the need to **always be courageous**. He also reminds us that each one of us will be judged, as he says: **“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body whether good or evil.”** We can draw from this that being a husband and father according to God’s plan is a demanding and important role.

The prophet Ezekiel speaking for God says that, **“I too will take from the crest of the cedar, from its topmost branches tear off a tender shoot and plant it on a high and lofty mountain.”** The prophet went on to say: **“It shall put forth branches and bear fruit and become a majestic cedar.”**

Perhaps this passage of Scripture can be applied to fathers as they take their small tender children and raise them in such a way with their wives that the children become strong majestic men and women who are **faithful to Christ and His Church; and one day stand on that high and lofty mountain which is heaven.**

Fatherhood is hard work. To be a good husband and father, men need to be men of prayer who sow seed of faith in their children and protect their wife and children. In doing so; fathers are making ready; a ripe harvest for the Kingdom of God.

St. Joseph Universal Protector of the Church! Pray for us!

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/061718.cfm>

Ezekiel 17:22-24

2 Corinthians 5:6-10

Mark 4:26-34

<http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2017/12/20272/>

<https://www.firstthings.com/article/2018/01/the-zealous-faith-of-secularism>

