

11<sup>th</sup> Sunday per Annum - C  
2 Samuel 12:7-10, 13;  
Galatians 2:16, 19-21;  
Luke 7:36-8:3  
Little Flower - 6/16/13

My Brothers and Sisters,

The parish staff and I want to wish all fathers a very blessed and happy Father's Day. Thank you to all the fathers in our parish, and thank you to all the men of our parish who assume a parental role in the lives of children.

Today's readings offer some valuable insights into good parenting.

At the baptism of infants, we remind parents that they are to be the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith and pray that they may be the best of teachers. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul wrote, "... *it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me*" [NRSV]. As Christians, our number one goal for our children should be that they become Christ-like, i.e., that they "grow into the likeness of the risen Christ."<sup>1</sup> This will not happen unless we teach and model the faith and values that Jesus himself taught and lived. I will be very blunt. No matter what else we give our children, if we do not share the gift of faith with them, we have failed them.

Today's reading from Galatians also reminds us of two other truths that we need to understand in order to share them with our children. Paul wrote, "*I do not nullify the grace of God.*" In other words, Paul recognized and taught that ultimately all that we are and have are God's gifts to us directly or indirectly through others. Likewise, St. Paul makes the point that we are not saved by our works but by grace and by faith in Jesus Christ. In other words, Paul recognized and taught that none of us are self-made men or women. Therefore, we want to teach our children to be humbly grateful to God and to all those who have influenced their lives for the better. Young people who are humbly grateful also tend to be more compassionate toward others.

In today's first reading, we hear part of the story of King David and Uriah. The point of the story was that David used his authority and power to destroy Uriah because he desired Uriah's wife. People in authority often confuse authority with power. In reality, it is people's need or desire for power or control that gives rise to abuse. We also know that bullying among young people is epidemic today. On the other hand, Jesus was very definite that authority is for leadership and service or servant leadership. We need to teach our children that if they have power, authority, leadership, or influence over others, they have a responsibility to use it for good.

The final life lesson for our children is in today's Gospel. In today's Gospel, Jesus teaches the power of love and forgiveness. Love calls forth the best in others. In a talk, Dr. Joseph Mazzei made the point that it is not enough that our children know that we love them. They need to experience that love; they need to feel loved. Also, one of the most important lessons we can teach children is the power of forgiveness. They need to understand that evil never gains a victory until evil is repaid.

My brothers and sisters, we can only teach these four life lessons to the young people we influence if we model them in our own lives. As I have said many times, children learn what they live and live what they learn.

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<sup>1</sup>Preface of the Holy Eucharist II, *The Sacramentary*, (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1974).