

God Willed Every Child Should Have a Father to Mirror His Own Eternal Fatherhood!

**“Fatherhood is from God,
and it must take once again its rightful place among men.”**

St. Joseph spoke the above words [in red] to Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil in the message of Our Lady of America® on the eve of his feast in 1958. There are two aspects to this statement that apply in a critical way to our current culture that is increasingly denying the reality of God, both in His existence and in His essence as a loving Father, and that is increasingly negating the vital role of fathers in the human family, a role God Himself ordained when He created man first and made him the progenitor in the procreation of life, giving him authority and headship in the human family. At the level of the ordinary Christian we will ponder the theological understanding of God portrayed in Sacred Scripture that addresses God’s nature as Father and see what role God intended for fathers and why fatherhood **must take once again its rightful place among men. God gave us St. Joseph to put a face on His own Divine Fatherhood and to model God’s idea of human fatherhood to all men.**

In our human nature we see fathers as those male creatures who originate or generate life and found a family built on love, education and protection. Adam is the name we give to that very first male creature or ancestor, the progenitor of human life from whom we have all been born according to the flesh, our nature. As children of Adam we incur the terrible effects of his original sin against God—intellectual darkness, spiritual blindness, concupiscence of the flesh, physical death, and worst of all, spiritual death in the loss of sanctifying grace which alienates us from the All Holy One Who is grace, goodness, truth and life Itself. God, the Creator, the Eternal Progenitor of all that is, therefore Father of all, took pity upon his children and promised us a Redeemer, a new Adam Who would not only restore but would transcend Adam’s original grace, reversing the effects of that sin brought on by pride and disobedience by His own perfect humility and perfect obedience to the Will of God. This new Adam would be God’s own Divine Son Who would assume our human nature and die in our place to satisfy eternal justice so infinitely offended by the first Adam’s sin; banish our darkness and bring wisdom to our minds with His Eternal and unchanging Truth; take our stony hearts and give us His own Heart; nail death to the cross and pour out on us His Spirit of adoption and new life as He returns to His Father to prepare a place for us. **Can Adam’s first grace even hint at the grace this second Adam has won for us?**

From the beginning of man’s history God raised up prophets to speak to us on His behalf. Isaiah 64:7 tells us, **“...O Lord, you are our father; we are the clay and you the potter; we are all the works of your hands.”** Malachi 2:10 asks, **“Have we not all**

the one Father? Has not the one God created us?" Throughout the Hebrew Testament we see God drawing His people, like little children, away from the evil of idolatry and the pagan worship of false gods, away from human sacrifice and adultery and lusts of every kind, in order to care for them like a father, teach them His ways and form them into a chosen people after His own heart. He made a covenant with them to be **their God** and they would be **His people** if they would obey His commands. Thus all the world would witness the fatherly care He bestowed upon His people and would confess that He is surely the One True God. In the movie **The Ten Commandments**, after the scourge of the 10 Plagues that showed the mighty deeds of God to deliver his people from bondage, Ramses, the Pharaoh of Egypt who made himself a god like the kings and pharaohs before him, confessed that the God of Moses truly **IS God**. But that paternity of God in the Old Covenant was still veiled, largely revealed through specially chosen ones, Prophets and Priests, who acted as God's tongue to speak His fidelity and love to His people and to ask for theirs in return.

Then, in the fullness of time and faithful to His promise, God sent His own Divine Son into our world, born as a baby of a Virgin-Mother by the power of His Holy Spirit, to be like us in all things but sin. Jesus, The Christ, was born precisely to die, to die for our sins so that divine justice would be satisfied, thus freeing divine mercy to pour itself out on us in the Spirit of adoption through the Father's firstborn Son, making us His other sons and daughters, not merely by creation, nor even by redemption, but by the Spirit of Love that is given to us as an intimate share in His own divine nature. God made us for Himself, for His own glory, and to share that glory with Him forever. His love cannot be contained but impels Him to give Himself to us, unconditionally and without limit. **Oh, if we only knew how humbly and utterly at our disposal God has placed Himself to assist us in our every desire and need for His blessing.** There is no happiness nor goodness nor perfection, no purity or holiness, no peace nor any enduring life or love, apart from Him Who is Father and Lover of all. It is the mission of Jesus in His public life, not just to satisfy Divine Justice, but to reveal God to us profoundly as Trinity and profoundly as Father, a Father Who not only provides for us but Who desires to dwell most intimately within us with His sanctifying Indwelling Presence, and to hug us into the bosom of His Eternal Love. We belong to God because He has made us and because He has called us by name, the name of His own Beloved Son, Christ-ian, and in that naming He confirms His full authority and power over us as Beloved. From this Father in heaven every father and family on earth takes its name and receives a share in His authority over their children. This authority given to fathers holds them responsible to regard the shared procreation of human life in the highest esteem, for it comes not from man but from God. This essential role of the father in the human family is not an option for man but is the will of God; it holds a primary place in our understanding of Who God is.

When God created us, He designed Adam to generate human life by becoming one with the woman formed after him from the rib in his side, so together in the conjugal act, the two of them would bring forth new life to glorify God and people both earth and heaven. This act, already sacred by design in the order of nature as a share in God's creative act, was made even more sacred in the order of grace in sacramental marriage where it mirrors so profoundly and so intimately the very essence and nature of the life-giving love that is the inner life of the Most Holy Trinity Itself. In the Holy Trinity the Father Who is Life, Who is Love, **the Lover**, knows Himself so perfectly He is one with His own image, the Logos, **the Beloved**, the Son, and together they spirate the Holy Spirit Who is **the very Love between them**. Who but God could have fashioned a human act in the sexual makeup of man and woman to reflect so delicately and so awesomely the love-life of God that spills itself out so naturally in the gift of life, of love. While this God and Father of us all is pure spirit, He does not abandon His Son in His Sacred Humanity to be without the love of a father according to His own designs of nature and grace. From all eternity, just as He fashioned the Immaculate Virgin to be the most pure and holy Mother of the Incarnate Word, so, too, He fashioned Joseph, son of David, to stand in His place as father over the Word-made-flesh during Jesus' formative years, to care for and educate Him in His humanity for the ways and will of God as expressed in his Jewish religion.

Joseph, according to the early church fathers, was vowed to perpetual virginity like Mary and had his own Annunciation with the angel who announced to him his own unique and privileged vocation as co-redeemer with Jesus and Mary and father to Mary's Son in God's plan of salvation. Scripture says Joseph sought to divorce Mary quietly when he learned of her pregnancy, but the Church fathers tell us Joseph did not doubt Mary's integrity but wished to withdraw out of a holy fear of God for the wondrous deed He recognized God was working in her; Joseph felt unworthy and fearful lest he interfere with it. But the angel bid Joseph not to fear to take Mary, his betrothed, his wife, into his home for what was conceived in her was of the Holy Spirit. In Jewish law, betrothal was full legal marriage and the act of taking the bride into one's home confirmed the marriage. Mary is never an unwed mother exposed to shame; God protected her honor by providing her with a husband whom the public would perceive to be the father of Jesus. Joseph was also told by the angel to give Mary's Son the name "Jesus" for He would save His people from their sins. Just as Adam was given authority over all creatures when he was given the vocation to name them, so now Joseph is given authority over Jesus when he is given the vocation to name Him, thus becoming truly the legal and full father of Jesus in His Sacred Humanity, his earthly father in every sense of the word except biologically. Jesus would be subject to Joseph for as long as Joseph lived. It is a theological principle that before God gives a mission, He first gives the grace and gifts of nature to carry out the mission. So important did God deem the role of a human father in the life of the Sacred Humanity, as in all humanity, that He ordained it from all eternity and bestowed on Joseph every blessing to make him the most perfect image of Himself for Jesus, so

Jesus in His humanity would never be far from the love of His heavenly Father. Joseph has been referred to as the shadow of the Father, for in Joseph Jesus truly encountered His heavenly Father.

Though he speaks not a word, Joseph is dearly portrayed in the Gospels and highly revered in the early church as the spouse of Mary and father of Jesus. Mary and Joseph are Virgin-Mother and Virgin-Father of Jesus by unique privileges bestowed on them that set them apart from all other creatures and placed them closest to Jesus, and therefore to God, before all angels and saints, holiest of the holy ones of God. Another theological principle says that the closer one is to God, the holier one is. Why this unique and special grace upon Mary and Joseph? Because only the most holy and pure would be a fitting vessel to give flesh to Jesus and to be a godly authority over the Son of God. And because it was Joseph's vocation to hide both Christ's divinity and miraculous birth and Mary's divine motherhood and perpetual virginity from the public view until that time when God would call Joseph home and would then reveal His own divine Fatherhood over Jesus to all mankind. The doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity and divine motherhood would flow naturally from that revelation. At the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan God does that. The voice of the Father in the heavens calls Jesus "my Beloved Son," and the Spirit in the form of a dove rests upon Jesus. This revelation of God as a Trinity of Persons is also the public revelation of the Divine Sonship of Jesus and the Divine Fatherhood of God. Now Christ's mission begins and is revealed in accord with the will of His Heavenly Father. Joseph's role as putative or legal father on earth has ended. Mary's role will continue all the way to Calvary and after, until the Church Christ founded reaches its maturity and can stand on its own.

The New Testament is inundated with references to the Father. He is called the Father of Jesus, the father of believers, the father of mercy, the father in heaven, the father of glory, and we are invited to call Him "Abba!" "Daddy!" How many times must Jesus have called Joseph, "Abba! Abba!" in his love for his earthly father. If Jesus has taught us to call His heavenly Father our Father, too, then does He not also invite and expect us to call his earthly father, Joseph, our father, as well? Let us learn from Joseph as from Jesus how our Father in heaven loves us and longs to have us with Him in the glory of His kingdom. Heed these powerful words spoken by St. Joseph to Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil in March of 1958.

Kneel down, my daughter, for what you will hear and what you will write will bring countless souls to a new way of life. Through you, small one, the Trinity desires to make known to souls its desire to be adored, honored, and loved within the kingdom, the interior kingdom of their hearts. I bring to souls the purity of my life and the obedience that crowned it.

All fatherhood is blest in me whom the Eternal Father chose as His representative on earth, the Virgin-Father of His own Divine Son. Through

me the Heavenly Father has blessed all fatherhood, and through me He continues and will continue to do so till the end of time. My spiritual fatherhood extends to all God's children, and together with my Virgin Spouse I watch over them with great love and solicitude.

Fathers must come to me, small one, to learn obedience to authority: to the Church always, as the mouthpiece of God, to the laws of the country in which they live, insofar as these do not go against God and their neighbor. Mine was perfect obedience to the Divine Will, as it was shown and made known to me by the Jewish law and religion. To be careless in this is most displeasing to God and will be severely punished in the next world.

Let fathers also imitate my great purity of life and the deep respect I held for my Immaculate Spouse. Let them be an example to their children and fellowmen, never willfully doing anything that would cause scandal among God's people.

Fatherhood is from God, and it must take once again its rightful place among men. ... Behold this pure heart so pleasing to Him Who made it. ... I desire souls to come to my heart that they may learn true union with the Divine Will. ... The privilege of being chosen by God to be the Virgin-Father of His Son was mine alone, and no honor, excluding that bestowed upon my Holy Spouse, was ever, or will ever, be as sublime or as high as this. The Holy Trinity desires thus to honor me that in my unique fatherhood all fatherhood might be blessed.

(Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil, Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA®, Fostoria, Ohio, Pgs. 27-28.)

On March 30, 1958, St. Joseph spoke further on his role in our lives and the life of the Church.

I am the protector of the Church and the home, as I was the protector of Christ and His Mother while I lived upon earth. Jesus and Mary desire that my pure heart, so long hidden and unknown, be now honored in a special way. Let my children honor my most pure heart in a special manner on the First Wednesday of the month by reciting the Joyful Mysteries of the rosary in memory of my life with Jesus and Mary and the love I bore them, the sorrows I suffered with them. Let them receive Holy Communion in union with the love with which I received the Savior the first time and each time I held Him in my arms.

Those who honor me in this way will be consoled by my presence at their death, and I myself will conduct them safely into the presence of Jesus and Mary. (Diary, Pgs. 31-32.)

Oh the blessing of a good father and the curse to have an absent or abusive one. In his book, **FAITH OF THE FATHERLESS: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ATHEISM**, Paul C. Vitz undertakes a study of the world's best known atheists since the Age of Enlightenment until the present and contrasts their lives and impact on history with those who are theists, believers in God, during that same period. He draws a conclusion that alienation from God is most often a reaction to an absent or defective father, or father figure, in one's life. Since the father is "dead" to them, God is "dead" to them. **How can we miss that innate desire to identify God as Father?** Often the vacuum created by fatherlessness opens the door to an abnormal feminism.

Mr. Vitz sees a direct correlation between failed fathers and the rise of atheism and the decay of western society that increasingly attempts to remove fathers from the family and the decisions about life. He cites Friedrich Nietzsche who proposed nihilism, the "death of God" philosophy, Adolph Hitler with the Jewish holocaust, and Joseph Stalin, the Russian dictator who executed millions during his rule, as examples of fatherlessness and godlessness. Mr. Vitz cites others, like Jean-Paul Sartre who tried to build a philosophy around the absence of a father and of God, Sigmund Freud with his Oedipus Complex, and Madalyn Murray O'Hare whom we credit with the removal of prayer from our schools. All these people who were alienated from God were first alienated from their own fathers. St. Therese, the Little Flower, ever so close to her father, speaks of a brief encounter with Nietzsche that led her to dedicate her life to the conversion and salvation of atheists.

Mr. Vitz then studied prominent theists for the same period and found their healthy relationships with their fathers brought them, not only to faith in God, but to a more successful life in all aspects. G.K. Chesterton, a convert to Catholicism, had the highest regard for his father. Martin Buber, the Jewish theologian and author of **I AND THOU** was mentored by his grandfather. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, executed by Hitler, son of an agnostic but loving father, in time came to embrace theism. St. John (Don) Bosco who lost his own father while very young became a father figure to many orphaned or street boys in the wake of the Industrial Revolution; one of them, Dominic Savio who died at age 15, was canonized in 1954 by Pope Pius XII. It seems obvious that our understanding of God is shaped by our experience with our fathers and our faith prospers in proportion to the love we receive from our fathers or a father figure. This is testimony to the theological principle that grace builds on nature. But God is God and He is not limited by nature for He made it; nothing is impossible to Him. In Sacred Scripture we encounter women who become pregnant when nature says it is impossible. We see one little boy with a sling shot stand against a giant when a whole army of men would not. Miracles that transcend nature are everywhere in the encounter with God. Matt Talbot, patron saint of alcoholics, addicted for years, quit cold turkey one day when he encountered God. Eugene de Mazenod, patron saint of dysfunctional families who survived the

upheaval of the French Revolution upon his family, later became a priest and founder of the Oblates of Mary and was canonized by Blessed John Paul II.

In the message of Our Lady of America® Jesus addresses the great lack of Faith in the world today, and Our Lady calls us to a reform of life, a return to Faith and Purity. Then there will be peace. Perhaps when we put fatherhood back in its proper place as ordained by God and come to know Him as “Abba, Daddy!” we will again experience an age of miracles and peace. Our Lady of America® promised miracles, not of the body, but of the soul. O heavenly Father, grant such miracles to us!

In his book, **WE DARE TO SAY OUR FATHER**, Louis Evely questions how we picture God, what feeling He evokes in us, and by what name we call Him? He says:

The Son came to reveal the Father to us. And all that most Christians have retained of his mission is the revelation of the Son. Their religion miscarries. They remain on the way (“I am the way”) instead of going where he is leading them. All their love of Christ should lead towards the Father. They would never be nearer to Jesus, more united to him, than by becoming sons. They would never show him more love and honour than when urged by his bidding and schooled by his divine teaching, they would make bold to say, Father. (Page 22.)

Now let us pray with the whole Church of Christ, the Triumphant in heaven, the Suffering in purgatory, and the Militant on earth, together with Jesus, The Christ, and St. Joseph, His Virgin-Father, protector of the Church and the family and the most perfect mirror of God’s Divine Fatherhood ...

The Lord’s Prayer

**Our Father Who art in heaven,
Hallowed by Thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory
Forever and ever. Amen.**

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