**FATHER’S DAY 2018**

One of the most precious images we have of God is as our Heavenly Father.

 The main point is that God the Father is not just the Father of Jesus but He is our Father too. And that intimate relationship between God and Jesus can be the nature of our relationship with God too. That relationship was broken and damaged because of the sin of Adam and Eve and we ourselves have done plenty to perpetuate the problem through our own sins and passions. Thankfully, however, Jesus came and restored that relationship through His voluntary Passion, Resurrection from the dead and His glorious Ascension.

 Jesus Himself taught His followers to think of “the One who is and was and is to come, the Lord Almighty” as “Our Father” whenever we pray. What a radical image that Christ offered to His disciples – telling them not to think of our All Powerful Creator as a distant God, as someone or something separate and far from us, but to relate with our Maker as our Father! And numerous examples Jesus offered highlighted this comforting image – think of the most beautiful story Jesus ever taught, the parable of The Prodigal Son, which more appropriately should be called the Parable of The Loving Father.

God as a compassionate, merciful, forgiving, grace-filled Father, One whose love for us is unconditional and unlimited, this is our understanding of Our Heavenly Father. That is the image of God for all Christians to embrace and hold onto.

I highlight this image of God because today our country commemorates Father’s Day. Today we celebrate and honor our fathers, and all the father figures in our lives, and thank God for the blessing they have been in our lives and the lives of many. Fathers can play such a central and influential role in our lives.

A dad is someone who wants to catch you before you fall, but instead picks you up, brushes you off, and lets you try again. A dad is someone who wants to keep you from making mistakes, but instead lets you find your own way, even though his heart breaks in silence when you get hurt. A dad is someone who holds you when you cry, scolds you when you break the rules, shines with pride when you succeed, and has faith in you even when you fail.

If Jesus called us to understand God as our Father, He obviously has a very high understanding of what a Father should be. A Father is supposed to be a model of love, peace, and joy; an example of someone who is compassionate to the marginalized, generous to the poor, ready to help those in need, merciful and forgiving to those who have fallen

What a different place our neighborhoods, our society and our world would be if our earthly fathers were all good, loving, merciful, wise, holy, peaceful, filled with divine light and love. Our God in heaven is perfect, we fathers strive for that perfection but we always fall short. We make mistakes but the important thing is for fathers to acknowledge their shortcomings. What a powerful witness when a father says to his child, ?I was wrong, I am sorry. I?ll try to do better next time.? And even more so, when the father backs those words up with congruent actions

 The vocation of being a father is of the utmost importance to all of us. Fathers are meant to show their children the love of God, our Father in heaven. The role of a father in the life of a child is most essential because through our earthly fathers we can get a sense of what God our Father in heaven is really like. How sad when children do not have the benefit of a loving father to guide them in this life..”

. A father is one who is faithful, an encourager and supporter of others, a caregiver and a protector of his loved ones. A father is one who guides His family – who leads first by his example, and second who walks hand in hand with his family, guiding them on a path that leads into the Kingdom of God.

.On Father’s Day, we lift fathers who love their wives, who are present and available to their children, who support and care for their families, who protect their homes, and above all, who teach their family to fear the Lord and lead them on the path of the Kingdom of God!

So let us pray for all fathers on this special day that God will help them to be a true reflection of the love that He has for all His children. We pray also for all our fathers who have died, that God may give them rewards of their labor in the eternal joy of His heavenly kingdom. A most blessed and joyous Father’s Day to all fathers everywhere