

COLUMNISTS

Fathers provide order to family universe

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Matthew 9:36-10:8. (R1) Exodus 19:2-6. (R2) Romans 5:6-11.

A teacher, after telling the story of Jonah being swallowed by a whale, asked her class how they would manage to escape if swallowed like Jonah.

One lad said he'd start a fire in the whale's belly, and "He'd cough me out!"

Another said that he'd stomp on his tongue "till he spat me out."

A thoughtful little girl spoke up: "I'd call my daddy and wait till he got me out." How fortunate that girl was who had a dad she learned to trust.

Sunday is Father's Day. The Sunday readings picture God as a loving father reaching out again and again to his wayward children. Wordsworth said that "to God Himself we cannot give a holier name than Father."

A woman lay dying of AIDS. A priest tried to comfort her, but to no avail.

"I am lost," she said. "I ruined my life and every life around me. Now I go painfully to hell. There is no hope for me."

The priest saw a picture of a pretty girl on her dresser.

"Who is this?" he asked.

The woman brightened. "She is my daughter, the one beautiful thing in my life."

"And would you help her if she were in trouble, or made a mistake? Would you forgive her? Would you still love



a word
for
sunday

By FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

her?" the priest asked.

"Of course I would!" the woman cried. "I would do anything for her! Why do you ask such a question?"

"Because I want you to know," said the priest, "that God has a picture of you on his dresser. And he is waiting for you, his child, with love."

On the sixth day, God created Father Adam and Mother Eve. On the seventh day, as God was resting, they asked him to give them something special for their birthday. So God reached into his treasure chest and took out a sacred coin. On it was written the word "love." He gave it to them.

But on the next day, Father Adam and Mother Eve sinned. As they left the Garden of Eden, they asked God for an assurance that he would not abandon them.

"You have the coin," he told them.

"But the coin says 'love,'" they an-

swered. "We have lost love. How ever will we find it again?"

"Turn it over," God said.

On the other side of the coin was written the word "forgiveness."

You see there is no love without forgiveness and no forgiveness without love. They are the two sides of the same coin. They are the two sides of God the Father. "God proves his love for us: that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (R2).

God wants all earthly fathers to reflect his fatherhood, to be loving and forgiving. Still more, he is a creator; he wants fathers to be procreators, never to use artificial contraceptives. He is a provider; he wants fathers to be good providers, not to squander their earnings on excessive drink or gambling. He is a protector; he wants fathers to protect the family by giving it moral leadership.

Is there daily prayer in the home? If not, why not? Is grace said at the table at every meal? If not, why not? Does the entire family go to Sunday Mass, monthly confession? If not, why not? Are children being given religious training? If not, why not? You know whom God will hold responsible for the spiritual life of the home? Fathers!

Children need authority and discipline; they need the father. He is like the law of gravity, giving order to the universe of the family, keeping kids in

orbit without fear of flying off in tangents, making the home a stable place to live in.

Wives need the love and strength of a man called both father and husband — just as husbands need the love and strength of a woman called mother and wife.

So critical is the role of fathers that we must pray for them: Guide them, Lord; reward them, Lord; help them, Lord; guard them, Lord; bless them, O Lord!

Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming, N.Y.

Daily Readings.

Monday, June 17

1 Kings 21:1-16; Matthew 5:38-42

Tuesday, June 18

1 Kings 21:17-29; Matthew 5:43-48

Wednesday, June 19

2 Kings 2:1, 6-14;

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Thursday, June 20

Sirach 48:1-14; Matthew 6:7-15

Friday, June 21

2 Kings 11:1-4, 9-18, 20;

Matthew 6:19-23

Saturday, June 22

2 Chronicles 24:17-25;

Matthew 6:24-34

Speaker lets word out: Fatherhood is fun

Patrick Reardon, an urban affairs writer for the *Chicago Tribune*, spoke recently at a symposium in Chicago on the state of fatherhood today and reminded the audience how difficult fatherhood is in our society.

"Fathering isn't a game," he said. "You don't win or lose. It's not play. There are no rules.

"It's not like sports. It's not like work. There are no stats. There are no commissions. Your family doesn't have a father of the month. You're it for better or worse. Month in and month out.



faith &
work

By GREGORY F. AUGUSTINI PIERCE

"There are no touchdown runs in fathering. No end zone dances. No slam dunks. No five-hit shutouts.

"No retirements either."

For those of us trying to do the work of fathering, it is sobering to remember that it is serious business. The lives of the children who have been entrusted to us are dependent on us doing a good job.

On the other hand, Reardon revealed a secret of fatherhood, one that more than compensates fathers for whatever sweat, tears, heartaches and

fears we endure. Fatherhood is fun!

"Fatherhood is more fun than watching sports," he confessed. "More fun than making money. ... More fun than driving fast. More fun than drinking hard. More fun than sky-diving. More fun than motorcycles. More fun than rodeos. More fun than gambling. More fun than games. More fun than winning."

(Please don't tell our wives.)

Happy Father's Day, Dads.

Pierce is co-publisher of ACTA Publications, Chicago.

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from the Catholic Courier

Catholic Organization Directory

Publication Date: June 27th
Advertising Deadline: June 18th

The Diocese of Rochester is home to numerous organizations for lay Catholics — from fraternal and service groups to spiritual and prayer leagues. This special section will provide an opportunity for them to inform readers of their histories, purpose and membership.



Health & Today's Catholic

Publication Date: July 18th
Advertising Deadline: July 5th

The Catholic Church's teaching on health-related issues stems from Scripture. This special supplement will offer readers an unique perspective on those issues while offering valuable information on modern health-care programs.



Education

Publication Dates: August 8th
Advertising Deadline: July 25th
The Rochester Diocese has made lifelong Christian education its top priority. Thus,



as students gear up for the first day of school, the Courier will make its annual study of trends, developments and issues in education — from kindergarten to the continuing education of adults, from Catholic schools to religious education programs.

Catholic Courier

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