

Father's Day ~June 20, 2010
The Twelfth Sunday of Ordinary Time

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A group of first graders was asked to draw a picture of God in their Sunday school class. Their finished products contained some interesting theology.

- ♥ One child depicted God in the form of a brightly colored rainbow.
- ♥ Another presented him as an old man coming out of the clouds.
- ♥ One little boy drew God with a remarkable resemblance to Superman.
- ♥ But the best picture came from a little girl. She said, "I didn't know what God looks like, so I just drew a picture of my daddy!"

I wish every little girl and every little boy could see God in her or his father. Never before has it been more important that we have good dads. These are stressful times and times that require superlative parenting.

Not every biological father is a good dad. In fact, today there are step-dads who are facing the challenge of being dad to children who may or may not be ready to accept them. And then, too, there are grandfathers who are filling the role of surrogate dads. This is a new world, particularly with regard to the family. Today we salute all those men who are conscientiously seeking to provide a wholesome, Christian environment to children and youth in whatever role they may be.

Our theme for today puts the emphasis on who we are—not so much in relation to an earthly father, but to our Heavenly Father.

Did you know that in the writings of Islam there are ninety-nine names for God? None of them speak of God as "Father," as "Abba," as "Dad." Paul wrote:

"Through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus."

That little phrase reminds us not only of *who* we are but *whose* we are. It reminds us that we have received adoption as children of God from God, our Heavenly Father. That's *who* we are and that's *whose* we are. We belong to God.

Could it get any better?

This good news offsets what takes place much too often in our daily lives, especially when it come to negative labels or stereotypes, words or attitudes that can drag us down in our soul and spirit.

A father of a family introduced his children like this:

"This is Pete. He's the clumsy one of the lot."

"That's Kathy coming in with mud on her shoes. She's the sloppy one."

"As always, Mike's last. He'll be late for his own funeral, I promise you."

In this case, that father did a good job of labeling each of his children with their faults and mistakes. Those tapes will play over and over again in their heads and hearts and souls.

And people do that to each of one of us, and to those we love, all the time. They remind us of our weaknesses, our failures, our errors, our sins. They put us in our place.

The Good News is that our Heavenly Father is not like that. Instead of using words and labels that can wound us, his words are: HEAL, EMPOWER, and LIFT UP!

Do you know what God says about you?

You are fearfully, wonderfully made.

You are created in the image of God.

You are accepted.

You are loved.

You are anointed.

You are a New Creation.

You are blest.

You are a child of God.

You are a child of light.

You are of great value.

You are my friend.

As we conclude, a poem comes to mind that brings today's lesson home.

I may be young; I may be old.

I may be hot; I may be cold,

But I am God's Child.

I may be educated; I may be unlettered.

I may be free; or I may be fettered.

But I am God's Child.

I may be black; I may be brown.
I may be white; I may be a clown.
But I am God's Child.

I may be rich; I may be poor.
I may wear a brace; I may even snore.
But I am God's Child.

I may be short; I may be tall.
I might have hair; I may be bald.
But I am God's Child.

I may be fat; I may be skinny
I may have muscles; or not have any.
But I am God's Child.

I may have a family; I may be alone.
I maybe can sing; I may swim like a stone.
But I am God's Child.

I may live in a house; I may live in a trailer.
I may be successful; I may be a failure.
But I am God's Child.

I may be a sinner; I may be a saint.
But a nobody, I certainly ain't
'Cause my friend Jesus is my Savior.
I am somebody. I am God's Child.

