

"May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in Your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer".

First off, Happy Father's day to all those who have been in the role as a father or some sort of pater-familias to those among their loved ones and community. What is a pater-familias you may ask? Well, the **pater-familias** was the head of a Roman family during the time of the Roman Empire, and could legally exercise autocratic authority over his extended family. The term is Latin for "father of the family" or the "owner of the family estate". This dominating term is what many envision in stereotypical circles what the father may be in many homes.

Today, on what is also Trinity Sunday, I wish to explore a deeper meaning of Father that is more dynamic, inclusive and, just frankly, different than what we may be use to. Trinity Sunday celebrates the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, the three Persons of God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Let's start with the Father. While preparing for this day, I reflected on what both my role as a Father and the role our Father God plays in our daily life. I look at Judith my daughter, and see the excitement in her face as the first moments hit us both when I walk into her room in the early morning to greet her after a long evening of rest. It is the beginning of the day, and she awakes, as I do, with joy and an eagerness to play, laugh and do tickles as any child eager to see a parent. I try to reflect on "God the Father" of the Trinity as something similar, but it is hard. For many, like myself, I know the exploration of a parent relationship can be difficult as some grew up with very different parents that may not be the best of reflections of what we want to see in "God the Father". My own father was absent much of the time due to his work schedule, and his undocumented status with immigration made life tenuous for our household many a times. As a first-generation child, I craved having that understanding of the experience of having parents and a situation that was different, and unfortunately, many times, my father could not give that

understanding and empathy that I so needed and sought. In hindsight now, as a father of my own, I realize, he was probably tired, confused, or simply, in that moment, unable to guide. He did his best to provide. But, he was there at the beginning and that is huge now as that I reflect on it. In the verse of Proverbs today, a line stood out at me that said “The Lord created me at the beginning of his work.” I reflect on this with my own dad. It was at the beginning my dad was there. He worked the long hours to provide for our home and, in the best way possible, imparted the best values he could in a world that did not always welcome our household situation of having someone undocumented in our family. Is that not what the Father God does for us? He works behind the scenes in what is a damaged and loud world to do and guide us the best way possible. I know my dad has great pride in me. A similar pride is reflected through God the Father in us as it is says in Proverbs, “You have made him but little lower than the angels, you adorn him with the glory and honor; You give him mastery over the works of your hands;

you put all things under his feet.” It is daily that we may fall into this thought process of not knowing where the Father is or what His plan may be, but it is through his making of us that glorify his ever presence among us. He gave us the tools to be with each other and be one community. We have all been given the stated “mastery” of God given gifts by God the Father to uplift his children. I think of the choir here who have been given the “mastery” gift of music to share His glory of beautiful song. I think of the talent of the altar guild who have been given the “mastery” gift from God the Father to help make a home of welcomeness and adoration that is the chapel. I think of the “mastery” gifts from God the Father to the leadership of those among the Vestry and pillars of the church who have the leadership talents to direct the gardeners and repair men weekly, organize the bulletins, draft order of services, pay the bills and do so much more behind the scenes. Of the Trinity, I invite you to see God the Father in these talents and actions of yours for it was He who “gave us

Mastery to do so.” Be God the Father in action through your mastery of gifts.

Well that one was part of the Trinity. What about the others? Well, like every “tired dad” I like to think that there are others behind the dad, like me, supporting us with so much more. The father only exists in the context of what is a “family”. What is the other part of this family? What is this other part of the family of the Trinity? Paul says it best in the first line of Romans with “since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is because of the second part of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, known as the “Son” that we are able to have “peace.” Think about that for a minute. What is Jesus in this context if not a bridge to the Father to have **peace**. I reflect on my role as a dad again and think of what peace means to me with a toddler running around, screaming, trying to get into every dangerous crevasse of the house as she refuses to play with her many toys we bought her and, to put the cherry on top,

has decided it would be fun to rip dirty diapers from under her during changings and fling them at her distressed parents. Where is this peace? I will tell you where it is. It is in the moments when after a long day, I get the kiss and get “night-night” words from her. It is the peace when other loved ones, like my own wife Jamie, or the amazing grandparents can share in these experiences we have in raising Judith. In the same Chapter of Romans, Paul says, “we boast in our sufferings knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint.” I think many parents here would agree that having and raising a child can be one of the most difficult tasks of “endurance” and “sufferings” in life for many reasons whether it be, providing for the child, raising it with the values you wish to instill or simply knowing when to let go. I find it with little coincidence how new babies come with the connotation of “hope” even though they come with the stated work of “sufferings” and “endurance”. Where is the hope in this labor of raising children? It is the hope of the future

of choosing life and raising life within the community of Christ and choosing to bring a child into it. We actively made that decision as parents. The Trinity provides that same anecdote with the “Son’s” own journey into this world. It was through Jesus’s sacrifice on the cross of suffering that produced the hope that Paul talks of. God made that choice for his children. For us. Hope is what brings us here today in the community of Christ because of the decision of God to give his only begotten son for the sake of us. This decision was powerful to “not disappoint”, as said in the reading today, as we may have hope of a unity with the “Father” because of what the sacrifice of what the “son” provided. It is the sacrifices that we as parents make that allow us to find peace with the toil of what we do today that gives our kids the blessings and hope for tomorrow. In that same context, it is in Jesus we may find peace with the Father in eternity and hope for what will be better tomorrow and in eternity.

For our last journey of the Trinity, I'd like for you to consider the Spirit. In the Gospel, Jesus speaks of the Spirit as one that "will guide us into all truth" and "declare to you the things that are to come." This Father's Day, I recognize wholeheartedly, my job as a parent truly takes a village when raising a child. There was a recent study on a podcast with Ezra Klien where he was discussing childhood development with a specialist in the field. One of the concepts that hit me as a listener that did not seem intuitive at the time was how the exposure of children to other kids is key to accomplishing milestones in their development. To be among peers, and not only parents, is key to their ability to learn how to socialize, talk and other skills. Judith's own journey of saying now almost 20+ words, running along our backyard gardens and working toys with fine motor skills come with the gift what she has learned here at the St. Michael's Children Center. I did not do this alone as a father or parent. She did this in large part BECAUSE of St. Michael's Children Center. In the today's Gospel, John states how the Spirit "takes what



is mine and declare it to you.” Judith is of me, but I recognize the success of her growth came with the guiding “Spirit” of St. Michael’s Children Center. I also have the guiding understanding that it will be the “Spirit” with this community of Christ at St. Michael’s Children Center that will guide Judith to God through the actions of kid’s Chapel that happens here every Wednesday, the Christian education within the school, and the values of love, generosity and kindness that I know will be taught to every kid at St. Michaels. If I was to have isolated Judith, how different would her experiences have been then in meeting those milestones and receiving the Spirit? How different would it be to isolate ourselves from the shared community of Christ? Does that prevent us from hearing and experience “The Spirit” within the Trinity and hitting our milestones with Christ? What is the “Spirit” calling you to do today? I echo the verse once more of the “Spirit guiding you into all truth.” I find my own call of the “Spirit” to be here today and speak on its behalf. I find the call of the Spirit to do the outreach ministry within the vestry

continuing to invite families to the body, community and love of Christ. I find the call of the Spirit to speak confidently today to say it is reaching out to you, but you only need not isolate yourself in order to hear it. Where is it calling you today? Is it to participate in the ministry of CASE? Or maybe is it a quiet invitation to reconnect with Christ through the practice of contemplative prayer session hosted at Yeaton Hall? I invite you to open yourself to the Spirit today and listen. What is your calling from the Spirit?

The Trinity is not only the Father, but it is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Let us celebrate father's day this way in the dynamic way we celebrate the Father God in unison with the Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen