

The Fig Tree

"Nurturing the seed of faith"



Joseph's Dream

a wake ... a sleep ... a dream
asleep. a dream
in the middle of the night, in total darkness
an audible vision like none felt before
a shiver down my spine
a quickening of the heart
a mantra repeated deep within: wake up
awake
translating the dream into flesh
a whisper speaks very loud in the bowels of my being
a clear whisper noticed by the heart
spoken in the light of day:
choose life
give life
protect life
no longer a dream
now a daily choice
life

*Philip Chircop SJ
19th March 2013*

St Joseph Patron Saint of Fathers

According to St Matthew, Joseph was a carpenter. He is referred to in the Gospels of St Matthew and St Luke. He comes from an important family, the line of King David. St Matthew and St Luke also present Joseph as a just man, a devout and loyal Jew, who attends to the Jewish legal and religious obligations surrounding the birth of Jesus and offers care and protection to the child and his mother—including escaping to new lands and places to find safe havens and shelter.

Welcome to our ninth edition of “The Fig Tree“. It is hoped that parents, caregivers and grandparents will use this as a tool to build upon the faith of their family. We strongly believe that the home is the place where faith is best caught, taught, practised, nurtured and lived out. The role of the Church is to nurture and resource you in living this out, and be a place where we come together to share life with all its ups and downs.

We hope you might find some ideas that will assist your family in finding deeper meaning, and new life. This month we reflect upon “Father’s”, and particularly the Fatherhood of St Joseph.

Rev’d Michael Armstrong.

Father’s Weakness

Father,

I like you

when you are not so sure of yourself,
when you hesitate,
when you are bewildered and insecure.

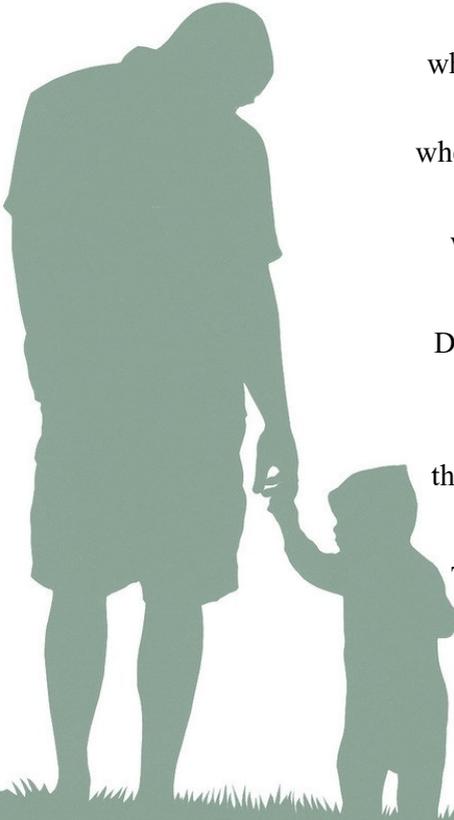
I feel closer to you
when you have problems and ask
questions.

Don’t think that when you are weak
you are weak to me
because I can see
that to allow your weakness to show
requires strength.

Thanks for not playing the game,
for not putting anything on.

Thanks for being real
and coming close to me.

Ulrich Schaffer.



Seven “F’s” of Good Fathering

Firmness

Fathers who are getting love through to their children are fathers who are firm. Fathers who have integrity, who stand firm in what they believe in and what they stand for will be respected by their children. Children need to have someone that they can come to for protection and firm guidance in their lives.

Fairness

Fairness in discipline, generosity and all their dealings are essential. Firmness must be balanced with fairness. Children who are treated fairly will grow to know justice and show concern for others.

Feeling

Children are observant. They generally know if fathers are covering up their emotions or not. Young boys soon learn that “men don’t cry”. What a sad fallacy. Men do cry, and it is acceptable. Expressing emotions is an important part of life and demonstrates honesty about who we are, and how we truly feel.

Funloving

A good sense of humour is essential. Laughter can heal many hurts. Having fun with your children (not making fun of your children) is essential in any relationship. Sometimes Dads forget to have fun because all the pressures of life take over.

Forgiving

To forgive another person is one of the most powerful things that any man can do. To seek forgiveness and to offer forgiveness are traits of a father who knows what love is really about.

Friend

Friendships are relationships that are based upon respect and companionship. Being a friend to your child means that you desire to be in a relationship which is not just parent/child. It is about being in a relationship where you can share all aspects of life’s up’s and down’s.

Faithful

It is faith in a loving God that will shine through in any father. Children will learn best about faith through experiencing it. If their father is a man of faith, a man after God’s own heart, then they will experience an incredible love that is based on that faith.

Eleven ways to enable our homes to become households of the Lord

1. Inviting Jesus to be the head of the household

There is only one boss, and one way – Jesus.

2. Prayer

Develop ways to pray that work in your household— grace, bedtime, breakfast?

3. Family Celebrations

Learning to celebrate the sacredness of life in the ordinary things. Bring God into all of life’s events – journeys, birthdays, bath time.

4. Rituals

Rituals and traditions give meaning to all of life. Good rituals bring a sense of holiness into the household. Why not start something like having dinner by candlelight once a week.

5. Worship

We need to be released from the shyness or embarrassment of praying, praising and celebrating God’s love by making it natural at home. Play Church music, pray out loud, bless one another, offer forgiveness and peace.

6. A Special Place

Create a special place in your home where things are placed to remind us of our faith journey. It could be your fridge door.

7. Nurture

Life is learnt through experience, not lessons. If faith is practiced naturally and shown in our actions, then we will have passed on a glimpse of the Divine. Nurture requires involving people, and not doing it for them.

8. Sharing

Sharing does not come naturally – it must be practiced. When we share with one another life’s ups and downs, joys and sadness, we come to know each other more deeply and are able to be in communion with one another.

9. Mission and Ministry

Jesus calls us all to minister to one another. We minister through our actions. Get active – sponsor a child, raise funds, make a meal, care for the sick etc.

10. Growing together

Become active in the Christian community. It is by being a part of a faith community that we can grow together. Being active is more than turning up, it is participating.

11. Have Fun

Learn to laugh with each other and not at each other. Laugh often and out loud.

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