

## HOMILY 12<sup>TH</sup> SUN OT YRC 2016

This weekend being Father's Day, I have been thinking a lot about a Father's love for his children. My own Father died 46 years ago, and I still miss him on Father's Day. In many ways I equate the love that my Father and Mother gave to me with the love that God has for each of us. I came across a quote from Christian author Max Lucado, and this is what he said: "If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it. If he had a wallet, your picture would be in it. He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning....Face it friend, he is crazy about you!" Did you ever think about it in that way? God is crazy about you! God loves you because you are you. God loves everyone on earth just the way you are. God is crazy about you.

We heard in the first reading that we are "all one in Christ Jesus," and so we are. And all people have the right to live in dignity and freedom from discrimination. I have been reflecting upon the conversations I have had with parents about their children. I talked to a father who told me that his daughter told him that she is a lesbian. He said: "I used to look down upon people with same sex orientation and I used to laugh at the jokes, but now it is my daughter and I love her. That will never change. It breaks my heart that she will have to face discrimination." I talked to a father who told me that his child is transgender. He said: "I don't understand. Why can't she just be really butch? Why does my daughter have to become my son? But I am going to keep trying to understand and love him." I talked to a father who told me that his son is a heroin addict. He went to al anon. He said: "I looked around at all of these parents and thought I cannot believe that I am part of this group. This is something that happens in someone else's family, not mine. But I love my son and I am going to learn how I can help him." I have planned funerals for children with Down's syndrome. It is really difficult for parents to bury children, but for a parent to lose a child with Down's syndrome seems to be a terrible deep pain.

I wonder about all of the Down's syndrome children who have not been born because their parents did not want them, and I wonder what those parents have missed. You see we can look down on people, discriminate against them, belittle them, judge and condemn them, until we love them. Loving them takes all of that away.

The second reading also says: "There is neither Jew nor Greek." I doubt that many care too much today about Jew or Greek, but replace that with neither Christian nor Muslim, citizen or undocumented. We have to stop discriminating against people because of a group that they belong to. You know, my doctor is Muslim. I picked her because a nurse friend of mine recommended her to me. I did not think too much about it until the first appointment I had with her. I thought: "This is kind of odd. I Catholic priest picking a Muslim doctor." But she takes very good care of me. We talk about our faith with each other. We pray for each other. The idea of excluding all Muslims from this country seem absolutely ridiculous to me. There is absolutely no evidence to support the idea that refugees are seeking asylum in other countries to commit acts of terrorism. Building a wall to keep people out of our country is not what we should be about. We should be about building bridges not walls.

God loves you because you are you. God loves everyone on earth and so must we. I am not sure what the answer is to all of the problems in the world today but I know it has more to do with love than violence, discrimination and retaliation. God is crazy about you. Maybe we need to be crazier about each other.