



# To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. To you, O Lord, I lift up my prayer.



## REFLECTIONS FROM FR. ROSS



We've all heard the expression, "Like father, like son." Well, this past week, I was thinking about my Dad and how, as the years go by, I find myself, in certain aspects of my life, becoming more and more

like him. Growing up, like most teenagers, I was sure that he had no idea of what it was like to be a young person. I remember on the day I was graduating from high school in 1968, my father was on my case because, according to him, my hair was too long and that I was starting to look like those crazy hippies. He said the next thing I'll be smoking those funny cigarettes with the strange smell besides looking ridiculous. Well that day, my Dad came across the father of one of my classmates that he knew when he was younger. My classmate's father looked at me and then at my Dad and said, "Ross, you're getting to look like your Dad more and more." I said, "I know, my Dad was just telling me that not too long ago." Well, I looked at my Dad and we both smiled.

One of the things that I learned from my Dad was what it meant to truly love another person and really care for them. Part of that lesson is that true love means loyalty and always being there no matter what. There were times when things were tense at home, but I could count on my Dad always being there even when I upset him.

When it comes to Jesus and his Father, we get to know him as our loving Father through Jesus. When we look at all that Jesus did and said, we arrive at the heart of the Gospel, which is, this is how much God loves us. As Jesus gave himself completely to us and for us, not holding anything back, to the same extent, the God, whom we cannot see, loves us, himself holding nothing back. So you might say, "Like son, like father." That is why it is so important for us to nurture and foster our relation with Jesus. To be close to him, to be in touch with him, is to be close to the Father, to be in touch with the Father. In another place in John's Gospel Jesus says, to see me is to see the Father.

In John's Gospel Jesus speaks of himself as the Good Shepherd who truly knows his sheep. There is a wonderful personalness in this. While God loves all of us together, he also knows each of us in special way and loves each of us personally. With that comes the truth

that God knows what is going on in our lives and is really concerned for us. Like that Good Shepherd, God leads us, nourishes us, protects us, forgives and heals us.

One of the aspects of God's care for us is his compassion and comfort. No matter what we are going through, no matter how hard, heart-wrenching, discouraging or apparently hopeless, God will be there no matter what with his comfort and consolation. Whether we have brought these difficulties upon ourselves or they have come upon us because we try to do the good or loving thing, when we turn to God in our distress and or sadness, we hear that, for those who turn to him, God will wipe every tear from their eyes.

What a powerful and beautiful image. God wiping away the tears from those who are weeping. It's obvious, that when we have these situations, we need to approach God even though he knows what we are going through. Our going to him is the way we open up our hearts to receive what he wishes to share with us; it is our recognition and acceptance of the fact that we cannot make it on our own.

A lot of times when we hear the Gospel preached to us we are reminded of our responsibilities and how we should live our lives; the Gospel presents us the challenge to try and follow the example of Jesus. Part of following his example is to turn to the Father in our difficulties and our needs. How often Jesus must have gone to the father in prayer in the those difficult moments and we hear how he was strengthened and how he continued on. We too need to follow that example; there are those times when the Gospel message is meant to heal and help us. And, having received that help from God, it becomes part of the message that we share with others, inviting others in their difficulties to turn to God who is also their father who loves them and will always be there for them no matter what.

In this Easter Season we celebrate Jesus, the risen Lord and Savior, who is with us as our Good Shepherd and as we faithfully follow him, he will lead us to that place where we truly come to know his father as our faithful, loving and loyal father, whose peace, comfort and strength will always be there even when things seem to be at their worst. God will always be there!

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