

Dear Friends,

The other day, I was sitting at Mass behind the family of one of our lectors, his two little girls were squirming around as mom was trying to settle them in their seats. As soon as their dad began to proclaim the reading the youngest of the two froze and squealed in delight "Daddy!". She had recognized his voice and she began to look around searching for him and where his voice was coming from. That same day at the Vietnamese New Year's reception, I was eating with some parishioners when a little boy slid and fell right under a table next to us and burst into tears. A split second after he fell, his dad was already there scooping him up and holding him ever so tenderly to console him.

These two separate examples of fatherly love really made me ponder of God's love for us as His beloved children and how we react to His love. In the first example, the dad didn't do anything but speak, his voice was enough to produce an outwardly expression of joy from his daughter. His words weren't even directed at her and she was happily searching for him.

Are we attentive to God's voice around us? Do we freeze and joyfully react to God's presence around us? Even if it's not directed at us? Or do we ignore that, which should fill us with glee, only to focus on the negativity and routine of the days? In the second example, dad was there, ready to pick his son back up, to console him, and to wrap him up lovingly in his arms.

As human beings, I imagine that we are a lot like toddlers in comparison to God, our Father. Constantly stumbling around, sliding, and falling. How wonderful would it be to swoop up by our Father, to let Him embrace us and wrap His loving arms tenderly around us, and console us in those dark moments when we are at our worst, when we are face down fallen and broken? He does just that and more. Much like the dad in my example, God's right behind us, always there ready to help us back up and to console us; we just need to let Him be our Father. God is the perfect Father, loving us unconditionally and tenderly. He's there to pick us up and strengthen us with His words and love. We can hear Him in Adoration, scripture, through those around us; we just have to listen.

In a society that is in such high need of strong fatherly role models, it's so refreshing to see men stepping up and being good fathers. Men being courageous in their faith and strong in their morals. We're blessed to have a lot of good men serving in our St. Anthony community. Many serving in liturgical ministries, in various councils and committees, helping others through St. Vincent, ARISE, our own Pastor and Parochial Vicar. Answering the call from our First Reading to help the needy, feed the hungry, clothe the naked. The Responsorial Psalm speaks to this also: "*The just man is a light in darkness to the upright.*" and reflecting the words of the Gospel this week in being salt of the earth and light of the world to others through their actions and service.

I invite you to say a prayer for all of the men in your lives, in your families, and friends, and all of those in our parish community. Specially to remember in your prayers our Pastor Fr. Jack today on his birthday, and Fr. Bazil during his time away in India. We pray that God may strengthen, heal, and encourage all of the men in our community, that He may help them to know they are God's beloved sons and an extension of God's fatherly love to those around them.

In God's Love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dulce Casanova". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

**Dulce Casanova**  
*PA for Liturgy & Hispanic Ministry*