

Jer 20: 10-13

Ps 69:8-10, 14, 17, 33-35

Rom 5: 12-15

Matt 10: 26-33

Fathers' Day

Paul W. Galetto, O.S.A.

Speaking another language is indeed a great talent. Aren't we all impressed when someone says, "Bon Appetite" as we dive into our hamburger and fries? Don't you stand in appreciation when the polyglot is presented with a task and responds, "No problema." Don't all women swoon when a guy ends his conversation with, "Ciao, baby"?

Despite the admiration we may hold for such people, there is something more important than speaking another language and that, interestingly enough, is speaking the same language. As you may have heard, the British and Americans are two peoples separated by a common language. We have the same words, but each nation gives them different meaning. The same can be said for a dad and his family. Speaking the same language on the homefront means understanding the difference between what dad says and what dad means. Let me give you a few examples.

"Things like this build character." – This is a universal response to all losses. Since your dad is a character himself, he has probably had lots of losses and therefore speaks from experience.

"Keep your eye on the ball." – No matter what the sports problem, this is the answer. What dad is actually saying is, "You're doing something wrong, figure it out for yourself."

"Don't make me stop this car." – I'm sure none of us have ever heard this one before! This phrase acts more as a gauge; if it is spoken it is time to return to playing video games, to do crossword puzzles or to feign sleep.

"Now you listen to me Buster (or Missy)." – This phrase means that dad is so perplexed he has forgotten his child's name. This is probably understandable given the circumstances. The only phrase worse than this is when the father calls his child by both of his or her baptismal names in their formal version followed by the word "now" (i.e., Jonathan Michael, put your sister down NOW. Or, Melissa Margaret get off the phone right NOW).

"We're not lost. I know exactly where I am." – This statement proves that all dads have a sense of humor. It's obvious dad is lost, he's a dad; he's supposed to be lost! This phrase will soon become a relic of society as GPS takes over in more and more cars. The real question is: was it a dad who developed GPS so he didn't have to admit he was lost, or was it a mom who didn't want to argue anymore?

"You're not going out looking like that, are you?" – This phrase is used when dad has become the fashion police. Children must remember that this line comes from the same guy who will go out in his boxer shorts to the end of the driveway to pick up the morning paper. All things are relative.

Lastly, dads will rarely (if ever) say, "I don't know," or "I'd rather not talk about that." What they will invariably say, however, is, "Go ask your mother."

In today's Gospel, Jesus seems to be laying on the "dad-isms." Several of the expressions appear cryptic in nature. "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul." "Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin?" "Even all the hairs of your head are counted." What Jesus is saying here is no secret society syllogism, it is no hidden message; it is nothing other than trying to make the point that God our Father loves us beyond measure, beyond words, beyond our wildest imagining. Our true Father in heaven is Love and to understand anything else is to miss out on the greatest expression of love possible.

Love is the universal language that needs no translation. It is understood by all people at all times. There is no translation needed for a hug or an embrace. There is nothing more that can be said when a tear moistens the cheek of a proud parent. There is no need to translate, "Ti amo" or "je t'aime" or "ti quiero" or "ich liebe dich" into "I love you." If the actions don't say it, then the words really won't matter.

What this Fathers' Day Gospel reminds us is that we have a Father who loves us beyond price and that we, both moms and dads, men and women, boys and girls, we who are made in the image and likeness of God are called to Love as God loves - without limits and even without words.

Ciao, Baby.