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SERMON-SAINT JOSEPH PARISH
FATHER CRAIG LOONEY
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WE ARE GOD'S CHILDREN...SAINT PAUL TELLS US...AND BECAUSE WE ARE GOD'S CHILDREN...WE POSSESS THE BLESSINGS HE KEEPS FOR US...AND WE POSSESS WITH JESUS WHAT GOD HAS KEPT FOR HIM...GLORY AND LIFE EVERLASTING.

In the language of the KJV...Saint Paul calls us God's adopted children. We get to be God's adopted children through Jesus. It doesn't matter what our family tree looks like or where we came from. That means we enjoy all the benefits Jesus enjoys in being God's only Son...especially everlasting life.

In Paul's time...there was no formal procedure within Judaism for adopting children. If a man died, his brother automatically became head of the household and assumed responsibility for taking care of his children.

Adoption of boys in Ancient Rome was common among upper classes. The adoptive parents made the child a permanent part of the family...with all the rights of their natural children. Once the adoption process was complete it couldn't be reversed.

In the Middle Ages...abandoned children were often sold as slaves. The Church assumed the role of parent and guardian to stop this practice. These children were dedicated to the lay life in monasteries and convents.

Long Lost Family is a reality TV series that premiered on **The Learning Channel** in 2016. The show's hosts...both adopted children themselves...help people locate biological family members...most often the show profiles adopted children looking for their birth parents.

I'm an adopted child myself...what Saint Paul says about us being God's adopted children has a special personal meaning. Adoption is beautiful thing. My adoptive parents gave me a home and loved me and gave me the chance to love them back.

Because we are God's adopted children we get to call God by the same name Jesus calls

him...*Abba*...the Aramaic term for 'Father'. *Abba* denotes a personal and intimate relationship with God and says a lot about what he thinks about us...his children.

Jesus wants us to trust God in the same way he trusts him...by calling him *Abba*...more than just the formal 'Father'...more like 'Papa' or 'Dad'. Jesus tells us when we pray we should say..."Our Father"..."Dear Dad". We show no disrespect to God by calling him 'Papa' or 'Daddy'...we are doing exactly what Jesus told us to do.

Like biological children...adopted children are expected to act in a certain way consistent with being part of the family...that shows they understand the gift of love they have been given. We always want to act like we are God's adopted children. How we behave toward other people does matter...God sees our actions...we can't hide them from him.

The Gospel is specifically about how we act toward others. If we are disrespectful or mean we are not doing what God wants us to do...we disrespect him and are not acting like his adopted children. The best way for us to show we are his children is to follow the Great Commandment: "Love God above everything else and love others in the same way we want to be loved".

Jesus' warns us not to be deceived by the duplicitous actions of "wolves in sheep's clothing". That also means we must always use the gifts God has given us in the right and proper way so we aren't accused of being phony and hypocritical. If we always act for the good of others...God will bless the work we do...and we will "bear good fruit".

The "fruit" is the result of the work we do. We want our work to produce good results...to give God...*Abba*...*Papa*...the honor and glory he is due...and to bring others to him.

And God has honored us by making us his adopted children through Jesus! That's a gift we should thank him for every day.

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