

SCREEN: Happy Father's Day!

I'd like to begin by again wishing all dads a very happy Father's Day.

Did you notice this bundle sitting on the corner of the altar?

These envelopes list the names of those in our Father's Day Novena - all our fathers, grandfathers, and godfathers - living and deceased - including my dad who died three years ago.

They are like Fathers Day cards.

And for 9 Masses we will pray for them.

It's our way of honoring them and thanking them for being in our lives.

And it's not too late to submit your names.

There's a link in the bulletin and envelopes on the tables in the entranceway.

Just fill one out and drop it in the basket before you leave.

Now, I have to be honest, unlike Mother's Day, I used to struggle finding just the right card to give my dad on Father's Day.

Our relationship wasn't complicated.

We loved each other, but it definitely wasn't an expressive kind of love.

I know I told you this before, but whenever I'd call my parents' house, my dad usually answered the phone, and after a quick, "*Hi, how are you?*" he'd say, "*Let me get your mom.*"

He was a man of few words.

But I knew where I stood with him - we all did.

Here are some words I'd use to describe my dad:

he was totally dedicated to his family,

he was reliable, dependable and trustworthy.

I was so blessed to have him as my father.

SCREEN: Trust Me main screen

This is week two of our message series titled, Trust Me.

And just to recap from last week,

I talked about how challenging trust can be,

especially if you've ever been let down by another person or institution.

You find yourself asking, *'who can I trust?'*

The scripture readings in this series call us to trust in God.

Last week we heard that God our Father has a plan -
a plan for creation and for each individual in creation.

A plan for you and for me.

So rather than trying to live our lives according to our own plans,
we need to discover God's plan and embrace it.

In today's readings we heard about some individuals
who faced incredible crises which had them asking the question,
"Can I trust in God or not?"

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Our first reading came from the Book of Job.

Job is part of a group of Old Testament books called, the wisdom writings.

They give practical spiritual advice for daily living.

I like to think of them as the original 'how to' books.

Job was a blameless and upright man who had everything going for him -
he had a large, loving family, he had friends, had land and property -
life was great for Job.

But then through tragedy and calamity, Job lost everything.

And I mean *everything*: his family and friends, his property, even his health.

And understandably, this created a crisis of faith.

And at one point in the story,

Job gets to ask God, *"Why?"*

Why God? I thought I was your favorite, thought I'd earned your love.

Thought I could trust you to always have my back?"

See, at the time it was written, the common belief was that suffering
was a punishment from God for sin.

But what about when a good and innocent person like Job suffers?

Here's part of the answer God gave to Job:

**SCREEN: Who shut within doors the sea,
when it burst forth from the womb;**

**when I made the clouds its garment
and thick darkness its swaddling bands?**

Huh?

What does this mean?

It's basically God saying to Job,

"my ways are mysterious, sometimes hard to understand.

I am almighty and all powerful."

To our ears, this can sound incredibly callous, even cruel.

But keep in mind that the Book of Job was breaking new ground by acknowledging that sometimes bad things happen to good people - through no fault of their own.

And we all know this because we've seen it,
either in our lives or in the lives of people we know.

And it's not a punishment, and it doesn't mean God loves us any less.

It's just part of life and our human condition.

And the way we get through the storms of life is by turning to God
and turning to others for help.

Which is what happened in the Gospel reading we just heard.

Jesus with his apostles in a boat when a violent storm blew up.

Some of them were fishermen by profession, yet this storm terrified them.

It so terrified them that they went to Jesus - who was not a fisherman - for help!

Where was he?

Asleep on a cushion.

Here's what happened next:

SCREEN: He woke up,
rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Quiet! Be still!"

The wind ceased and there was great calm.

Then he asked them, "Why are you terrified?

Do you not yet have faith?"

They were filled with great awe and said to one another,

"Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?"

So two things happened here:

Jesus calmed the storm and called them to trust in him - to have faith that he is God and has the power to do all things.

This is an important message for us too.

Because storms in life are inevitable.

Sooner or later we all find ourselves caught up in one.

Maybe you're caught up in one right now:

worried about a loved one's health, worried about your job, or school or finances, worried about the future.

Maybe your storm is so bad, you feel like you're drowning.

What can you do?

Hear God saying to you: *trust me.*

Trust that I'm with you.

Trust that I have the power to get you through anything that life throws at you.

Just like the Apostles, Jesus never abandons us in the storms of life.

He is right there with us, no matter how dark or desperate things get.

This can be hard to see and harder to believe.

I hear people ask all the time when facing a big challenge,

"Why is God punishing me?"

And I tell them that what they are going through is not a punishment from God, because God is love and loves them unconditionally.

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So like Job and like the Apostles,

when you and I are facing the storms of life,

we are being asked to trust that God is with us,

and to trust that God has the power to get us through.

But it's really important for me to say that God doesn't

always shelter us from life's storms and doesn't always stop the storms.

And it's not God being angry or callous, but just the opposite.

I think of it like parents whose greatest desire is

for their child to grow up to become mature and independent.

They know that for this to happen they sometimes

have to let their child discover things the hard way.

Setbacks and failure can sometimes be life's best teacher.

Adversity can build strength and resiliency in ways nothing else can.

It's never easy for a parent to watch,

but sometimes it's necessary for the child to learn and grow.

Well, in the same way God doesn't stop every storm we experience.

In the past year, so many people - myself included - discovered an inner strength we otherwise might not have found.

For believers, one of the silver linings in the pandemic's dark clouds has been the realization that God did not abandon us in the storm.

God was with us and God got us through.

And one powerful tool that helps us weather the storms of life is prayer.

One of my favorite prayers is called the Serenity Prayer.

SCREEN: God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

When I was studying to be a priest,

I was assigned to help out at a drug/alcohol treatment center for teenagers.

And every group counseling session would end with us

holding hands and praying this prayer together.

The teens in treatment were in the midst of the biggest storm they'd ever faced - a daily struggle to overcome addiction.

The Serenity Prayer is a prayer of surrender.

The very first step in recovery is admitting that one is powerless.

The second step is believing in a power greater than one's self can restore sanity.

Step three is turning one's life over to this higher power.

Surrender.

That's what Job had to do when he hit bottom.

It's what the apostles did in the midst of the violent storm.

They turned to Jesus admitting, *“we are powerless here, please do something!*
I heard an addiction counselor once summarize the first three steps of recovery with this simple formula:

SCREEN: (1) I can't.

(2) He can.

(3) I think I'll let him.

Prayer can be so effective in reminding us of God's love and power and in helping us to surrender when life's storms become overwhelming.

And God also comes to us through other people.

When someone is going through a really tough time, they will sometimes ask God for a sign:

Lord, give me a sign to let me know you're there.

God lets us know by sending other people into our lives.

99% of the time, it's how God makes his presence known.

It could be a family member or friend who calls to ask how you're doing.

It might be something you hear in church or that someone shares online.

I want to encourage you to look for signs,

and then be open to the people God sends your way.

In the midst of your storm, they can be your life preserver.

So this week, I encourage you to pray the Serenity Prayer any time you feel life getting overwhelming.

And as you pray it, surrender your storm to God.

Ask God to take charge.

Then keep your eyes and heart open

to the people God sends your way.

SCREEN: Trust Me main screen

I began my homily with some words I used to describe my dad.

Words that are also true about God.

God is totally dedicated to his family,
is reliable, dependable and trustworthy.

And we are so blessed to have God as our Father.

Let us turn to God any time we are hurting or in need,
believing that God will hear and answer our prayers. Amen. +