

**'You are my Son the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'**

**In an article entitled: "Who kills whom with what", published in "Scientific American" on July 1, 2013: journalist, Mark Fischetti stated: "In the U.S., where guns are plentiful, men commit more than 90 percent of killings. Their weapon of choice is overwhelmingly a gun".**

**Why men resort to such violence is a terribly complicated issue...**

**And I am not going to speak about the pros and cons of gun control**

**but, in light of our Gospel reading today... I personally wonder how many of the men who have killed another human being not as a service person serving their country, but as an act of uncontrollable violence,**

**I wonder how many of them have ever heard their father's say to them:**

**"You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased."**

**and I don't have statistics for this,**

**but my gut feeling is that women tend to direct their anxiety over self worth inward.**

**Consider how many women struggle with eating disorders,**

**depression, anxiety and other bodily issues...other ways they show profound disrespect to their own bodies.**

**I fully realize that all of these issues are multifactorial....**

**and I fully realize that often people have loving parents and still make bad choices...**

**yet I still wonder, would it have made a difference to people who have made harmful choices either towards themselves or others...**

**at some point in their lives, to have heard their father say to them:**

**"you are my child...the beloved...with you I am well pleased."**

**None of us are perfect parents: no one is a 'perfect' Dad or Mom ...**

whatever that might mean...

Some days the little darlings are sweet and co-operative  
and other days, they are pushing your buttons ....

but the bottom line is: every child deeply desires their parents love,  
their Mother and their Father's love...

Now, this meditation is not going to be a reflection on the art of parenting....  
but since "Father" is the most common name for God in the Christian Tradition  
and humanity is very often referred to as the children of God...  
it is worth reflecting upon our need to be loved and to love God,  
as our Divine Parent...as our Father ...

You know that one of the reasons Jesus got into so much trouble  
was because he was bold enough to not only speak the name of Yahweh,  
but to call God Abba...Daddy or Papa.  
Abba implies an intimacy with the Holy One of the Universe that was not only  
unthinkable, but was sinful....

Jesus, though, by using such a personal name for the Lord of the Universe,  
opened the door to a new image of God and a new image of Father  
that was not to be steeped in fear...

In Ancient times, fear was woven through and through a Father's relationship with his  
children

He could have them killed simply for being disrespectful.

He could sell them, because children were not human persons ...

children were the Father's economic property for him to do with as he saw fit  
hopefully for the benefit of the family.

But Jesus offered a radically new image of God and, just as radical,

**offered a new image of what it means to be a Father.**

**He gave us an image of a Father that was so compassionate,  
so loving, so forgiving and so merciful that was beyond the people's imagination...**

**Remember the prodigal son?**

**Jesus taught that the Lord of the Universe, the Holy One of the Cosmos,  
the Creator of all that is....that God... Yahweh loves each and everyone one us,  
no matter what and bar none.**

**He taught that Abba Loves all of US together and ALL of us, individually...**

**The Abba God of Jesus the Christ knows every hair on our heads  
and is concerned when anyone is hungry or cold or lonely....**

**Abba...Yahweh....the Lord God of the Universe....**

**totally, unconditionally loves what he has created...**

**and so what happens if a child never gets to know, to feel, to experience this kind of love?**

**As human beings, we often fail in our loving.**

**We often try hard to be good parents, spouses and friends,  
but we make mistakes and get stuck in our large egos.**

**That's all part of our human limitations...**

**but we must not put our human limits on the Lord of the Universe.**

**God, Abba, loves us more than the most loving human father or mother...**

**God's love for the individual is not determined by how well  
a person can follow the laws of culture or the laws of religion.**

**Jesus understood that all people: men and women  
thrive and reach their highest potential through love not fear....**

**He knew that to obey the rules of religion simply because you are afraid being punished  
doesn't get any one very far...it doesn't change the human heart.**



**let us direct our lives living in this Love  
and let us offer this most wonder-full love to the rest of the world.....**

**and let us never forget to say Thank you....Amen.**