

## Children of God!!!

In our Second Reading today, John says, *“ See what great love the Father has given to us, that we are called “the children of God”! That is what we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it has not known Him. <sup>2</sup> Dearly loved people, we are now the children of God, but it has not yet been shown what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him because we shall see Him as He is. <sup>3</sup> Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”*

Children of God! Amazing! But it was not always so. When we first entered this world, it was as God's enemies. God had other adjectives to describe our first status - foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved. The dominant emotions that govern the lives of sinful rebels are malice, envy, and hatred, says Paul in Titus 3:3.

God calls believers by various new names: we are His servants, a nation, His royal subjects, priests, soldiers. But the dearest term of all is that He calls us His children. And that's not just an honorary title - He has literally adopted us into His family, making us brothers and sisters of His Son, Jesus, through Baptism. Paul writes in Galatians 3:26 that we are all God's children through faith in Christ Jesus, for all who were baptised into Christ have been clothed with Christ. Our baptismal certificates are also our adoption papers.

What a great fear and doubt destroyer it is to be God's children! This is not a patronising term - the point is not to make us feel little, like babies. The point is to make us feel loved, important, and secure. God the Father has solemnly obligated Himself to do for us what all good fathers do for their children - provide for our daily needs, protection, and guidance. He provides us with a sense of being worth something, of being precious. He is there for us in emergencies just as good fathers bail their children out of trouble. When we need help, when we pray, we don't have to feel as though we are approaching a stranger. We are talking to our Father! We can call on a relationship that He initiated - it was His idea, His doing, His adoption, not ours. He stooped down to us since we couldn't climb up to Him.

Because we are now wearing Christ's holiness, we have everlasting life in us already. We don't know as yet exactly how our heavenly bodies will differ from our earthly bodies. But we can get a pretty good idea that it will be wonderful, because we will be like Jesus. Imagine that - He loves us so much that He kept His body even after the resurrection and ascension, just so that He could remain our human brother forever! Paul says in Philippians 3:21 that by the power that enables Jesus to bring everything under His control, He will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body. Wow! Is this worth waiting for or what? If these are the promises waiting for us, why would we go off looking for something better? What new revelations, new insights, or new knowledge could the gnostic cults offer that is better than that?

For now, that father-child relationship is not visible to the rest of the world. Frankly, to the naked eye, we don't look like heavenly royalty. But even if we don't get any respect from the rest of the world, that is no cause to doubt the Father's love - most of the world couldn't figure out that Jesus was God's Son either.