As he stretched out his neck on the block for the executioner, he humorously asked, *"Shall I remove my beard, for it has committed no treason?"* Then with his last breath he proclaimed, *"I die the king's good servant, but God's first."* Then the axe blade fell, sealing the faith and fortitude of this saintly man for all ages. His name was St. Thomas More, he was a member of Parliament, a sheriff, an ambassador, a knight, a lawyer, a judge, the Lord Chancellor of England, a defender of the Catholic faith, but above all a husband and father of five daughters.

This weekend we celebrate Father's Day in our nation, but what makes a good father? St. Paul tells us in the second reading, *"[T]hose who live … no longer … for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised."* St. Paul was asking us to stand up and live our lives for Christ no matter what storm comes our way and the world will be better for it. Fathers, I speak to you, in a spiritually storm-tossed world we need more men like St. Thomas More to face the challenges of this world straight on and to instill this value into your children and grandchildren. What is at stake if we fathers fail in this mission? Our covenant with God.

Humanity was first called into covenant at Mt. Sinai.   In the Book of Exodus, Moses was on the mountain top for forty days with God while the people grew impatient. They turned to Aaron, Moses' older brother, and asked him to make them a god that they could worship that was closer at hand. The people melted down their gold and fashioned it into a golden bull or calf. Moses was outraged that they had chosen an idol over the true God and violated the covenant, so he threw down the original stone tablets and shattered them. What did this idol stand for? Bulls were worshiped in the ancient world for their power and fertility, while gold was sought after for it value. Hence the people traded the true God for sex, money, and power.

Who failed to keep the people faithful to the first covenant? It was Israel's leaders. The fathers played the role of bishops and the first-born sons, like Aaron, were the priests. A bishop's role is to shepherd, protect the truth from error, and defend the faith like a soldier. Moses, burning with zeal for the faith, ground up the golden idol, made the people drink their false communion, and then installed new keepers of the covenant, the Levities. The fathers and first-born sons lost their status because they failed to keep the covenant by living for themselves and not for God and for those they were called to shepherd.

St. Thomas More faithfully kept the covenant by rising early every morning for prayer, to read Scripture, study the Catholic faith, and attend daily Mass. Though having a very successful professional he never sacrificed his family, but rather protected and provided for them. Looking for a more wholesome place to raise his family, he moved them to the English country side along the river and commuted to London by boat every day. Thomas even fed 100 people a day from the family home during the famine of 1528. Lastly, Thomas gave his life for the betterment of not only the faith but for his country. As second in charge in England and a personal friend of King Henry VIII, he stood firm and refused to support the king's divorce from his legitimate wife. He also would not approve of the king starting the Church of England and breaking away from the Catholic Church. Thomas's decision to keep the covenant led to imprisonment and an eventual beheading.

Whether we are called to be spiritual fathers, biological fathers, or have graduated to grandfather, we have only one chance to be good fathers because what we do will be felt for all generations. For St. John Paul II said, *"Faith is always demanding, because faith leads beyond ourselves. It leads us directly to God."* He continued, *"[B]ecause actions speak louder than words, you are called to proclaim, by the conduct of your daily lives, that you really do believe that Jesus Christ is Lord!"*