

## Trusting in Our Fighting Father

Day 4 of our [40 Days of Mercy Fast](#)

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'I Myself am fighting for them!' (1516)

Two streams of mercy converge in our God: His masculine, steadfast love which keeps covenant with us (hesed), and the deeply felt and tenderly expressed love that issues from His depths, as from the womb of a mother (rachamim). Truly we have a merciful Father whose love surpasses that of the most devoted parents!

And like good parents, our Father expresses His mercy by battling for our best; He wars for our well-being. Knit in the womb of His best intentions for us, and empowered by the very force that gave form to all creation, we are the blessed subjects of the God who fights for the dignity of His children.

Moses declared to the embattled Israelites: 'Don't be afraid of the enemy; the Lord Your God will fight for you. He fought for you in Egypt, He fought for you in the desert. Remember how He carried you, like a father carries a child, all the way until now...' (Deut. 1: 29-31) Here we catch a glimpse of the God, both tender and strong (PS 62: 11, 12), who carries us in one arm, and wields the sword against our enemies in the other!

Our Father is essentially 'salient', a psychological term referring to the parent whose care is a fusion of tenderness that earns the child's trust, and authority that commands its respect.

Good parents are wise to aspire to such 'salience': Annette and I have certainly tried. I marvel at her bond with the kids; in the course of casual conversation with them, she imparts wisdom and grace to them seamlessly. My strength tends to be in seeing and reminding them of their best qualities and the goals they have established to develop those qualities. When they have stalled on the way or gotten sidetracked, I fight for them mercifully by reminding them of who they are.

And whose they are. Annette and I try hard to not contradict the essence of their fighting Father. But our efforts are only a pale and imperfect glimpse of the One who loves them wholly. In that way, we seek as parents to model authentic reliance upon Himself, in the hope that their hope may expand heaven-ward.

Stalled and stubborn children grant parents myriad chances to trust the Father who fights for them. I recall one child who got into legal trouble and was to be sentenced in court. Crowded and shoved about by a throng of anxious, harassed lawbreakers like us, my son and I lost each other in the crowd.

We sat on either ends of the courtroom. From my view, he looked like a frightened orphan. I realized then that he was an adult, and that I no longer could determine his punishment, or his liberty. He did, other forces did, God especially did. That day in court, I released him to the fighting Father. I prayed for Divine Mercy as my son walked alone to the judge for sentencing.

‘I do not understand how it is possible not to trust Him who can do all things. With Him everything; without Him, nothing. He is Lord. He will not allow those who place their trust in Him to be put to shame.’ (358)

*‘Father, we trust You as the One who fights for our dignity and for the dignity of all. You meet us in the desert and carry us; You know our enemies and You battle them. Show us how You fight for us, tenderly and courageously. Train us to fight in mercy for those we love. May we not be so proud as to shame ourselves for not saving them. You alone can do this. Show us how to do our part, that all might be rescued from the grip of evil and set free unto Your best for their lives.’*