

REMEMBERING OUR FATHERS



Listen to your father who
and despise not your

begot you,
mother when she is old.

Get the truth, and sell it not-- wisdom, instruction and understanding

The father of a just man or woman will exult with glee;

And he who begets a wise son or daughter will have joy in that child.

Psalm 23: 22-24



We pause and remember that just as a father has compassion and vigilance for
his family, so too, our God.

He is always with us and loving and guiding us.

Holy is God, holy and loving, holy and protecting!

As we celebrate Father's Day, we naturally recall Saint Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus. He was an honest and upright man, a hard worker and provider for his Family and he was always vigilant for them protecting them from danger and harm. Today we remember all fathers, stepfathers, foster fathers, grandfathers, godfathers and all who represent father figures for us. We pray that he Lord will bless them and give them wisdom and guidance as they care for their special charges.

HYMN

LET ALL THINGS NOW LIVING

Let all things now living a song of thanksgiving
to God our Creator triumphantly raise;
Who fashioned and made us, protected and stayed us,
by guiding us on to the end of our days.
God's banners are over us, pure light goes before us,
a pillar of fire shining forth in the night;
Till shadows have vanished and darkness is banished,
as forward we travel from light into light.

His laws He enforces, the stars in their courses,
the sun in its orbit obediently shine,
The hills and the mountains, the rivers and the fountains
the depths of the ocean proclaim God divine.
We too, should be voicing our love and rejoicing
with glad adoration a song let us raise;
Till all things now living unit in thanksgiving,
to God in the highest, hosanna and praise.

PSALM 103: 1-18

Bless the Lord, my soul; all my being, bless His holy name!

Bless the Lord, my soul; do not forget all the gifts of God,
Who pardons all your sins, heals all your ills,
Delivers our life from the pit, surrounds us with love and compassion,
Fills our days with good things;
our youth is renewed like the eagle's.
The Lord does righteous deeds, brings justice to all the oppressed.
His ways were revealed to Moses, mighty deeds to the people of Israel.
Merciful and gracious is the Lord, slow to anger, abounding in kindness.
God does not always rebuke, nurses no lasting anger,
Has not dealt with us as our sins merit, nor requited us as our deeds deserve.
As the heavens tower over the earth, so God's love towers over the faithful.
As far as the east is from the west, so far have our sins been removed from us.
As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on the faithful.
For He knows how we are formed, remembers that we are dust.
Our days are like the grass; like flowers of the field we blossom.
The wind sweeps over us and we are gone; our place knows us no more.
But the Lord's kindness is forever, toward the faithful from age to age. He favors the children's children of those who keep His covenant, who take care to fulfill its precepts.

SCRIPTURE

EPHESIANS 3:14-16

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from Whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of His glory, He may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through His Spirit.... The Word of the Lord!

LUKE 2: 40-52

The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon Him.

Each year His parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when He was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom. After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the Boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but His parents did not know it.

Thinking that He was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for Him among their relatives and acquaintances, but not finding Him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for Him.

After three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard Him were astounded at His understanding and his answers.

When His parents saw Him, they were astonished, and His mother said to him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for You with great anxiety."

And He said to them, "Why were you looking for Me? Did you not know that I must be in My Father's house?"

But they did not understand what He said to them.

He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man. The Gospel of the Lord!

REFLECTION

Today's Gospel has been variously titled "The Finding of the Boy Jesus in the Temple," "The Boy Jesus in Jerusalem" and "Jesus Among the Teachers." The center of the narrative is really the loss and finding of Jesus and the dialogue with Mary, who speaks instead of the father; yet she expresses the "anxiety" of both of them. Jesus responds with a double-meaning phrase that can be translated, "I must be in my Father's house," or "I must be about my Father's business." The Gospel concludes with a twofold reaction: Jesus returns with Mary and Joseph and grows in wisdom, age and favor [with God], while Mary, as she did earlier, keeps these things in her heart.

The readings offer a realistic challenge to family life today, and not simply by emphasizing the virtues of fidelity to God, obedience and growth in wisdom. Every parent is faced in a different manner with the surprise that Mary and Joseph feels. As children mature after long years of love and guidance, the emerging adults begin to forge their own paths. Like Mary and Joseph, parents often cannot understand what they say, and yet Jesus' journey to self-understanding begun at Jerusalem concludes with a return to the support and love of Nazareth. Today's readings can comfort parents with the wisdom that their journeys are not unique or without companions. John R. Donahue

OUR FATHERS

Our fathers toil with hands and heart
To make our lives complete.

They quietly brave the winter cold,
Endure the summer heat.

Our fathers' lives are busy, but
There's always time for us.

They boldly face the ups and downs
And seldom ever fuss.

Our fathers are the greatest dads.
We know you know this, too.

But thank you for the chance to share
Our love for them with you.

WHEN GOD MADE FATHERS

When the good Lord was creating Fathers, He started with a tall frame. An angel nearby said, "What kind of a Father is that? If You're going to make children so close to the ground, why have You put the Father up so high? He won't be able to shoot marbles without kneeling, play pretend drinking tea, and kiss dolly goodnight, tuck a child in bed without bending, or even kiss a child without stooping?" God smiled and said, "Yes, but if I make him child size, who would children have to look up to?"

And when God made a Father's hands, they were large. The angel said, "Large hands can't manage diaper pins, small buttons, rubber bands on pony tails, or even remove splinters caused from baseball bats." Again God smiled and said, "I know, but they're large enough to hold everything a small boy empties from his pockets and a little girls paper dolls and jump rope, and to teach her to turn cartwheels, yet small enough to cup a child's face in them."

Then God molded long slim legs and broad shoulders, "Do you realize You just made a Father without a lap?" the angel chuckled. God said, "A Mother needs a lap. A Father needs strong shoulders to pull a wagon, to balance a bicycle, or to hold a sleepy head on the way home from the circus."

When God was in the middle of creating the biggest body any one had ever seen, the angel said, "That's not fair. Do You honestly think that form is going to get out of bed early in the morning when the baby cries, or walk through a birthday party without crushing one or two of the guests?" God again smiled and said, "It will work. You will see. It will support a small child who wants to ride to Banbury Cross or scare mice away from a summer cabin, or walk in shoes that will be a challenge to fill."

God worked throughout the night, giving the Father few words, but a firm authoritative voice; eyes that see everything, but remain calm and tolerant. Finally, almost as an afterthought, He added tears. Then He turned to the angel and said, "Now are you satisfied he can love as much as a Mother can?" The angel said nothing more.

~~By Erma Bombeck.~~

PRAYERS of INTERCESSION

Let us remember all those who hold the authority of a Father. May You, O God, bless and reward them for their sacrifices and love, we pray:

For all Fathers who shirk for whatever reason, their responsibility as the head of the family. May You, O God, give them the wisdom and courage to fulfill their leadership role, we pray:

For us, that we may be forever grateful to You, O Lord, for our earthy Fathers whether living or deceased. May we honor them all the days of our lives, we pray:

For those who would like to be Fathers. May You, Kind and gentle God, give them the gift of parenthood, we pray:

For all Fathers that they may mirror the qualities of our Heavenly Father, we pray:

For all those men who provide Fatherly guidance and support to children. May You, Divine Teacher, fill them with solicitude and understanding, we pray:

For all Fathers and those who take their place. May You, O gracious God, give them a plentitude of patience, understanding, forgiveness and love in relating with their families, we pray:

Our Father...

PRAYER for ALL FATHERS

Heavenly Father, through Your love and guidance, help all fathers to be caring and devoted fathers. Give them patience to listen with sincerity and wisdom to answer with truth. Help them not to insult that which is important to their children.

Grant them opportunities Lord for quality time. Help them to always point to You. Let them teach courage in adversity and to learn from their children's simple faith.

Cause occasion to demonstrate respect for the elderly and those in authority. Give them the inspiration to forewarn their children of the world's evils and empty promises and to teach them about their faith and to obey the commandments.

Thank You Lord for the wife and mother of their children. Through their love may they guide their children to a holy vocation in life whether priesthood, consecrated life, the married life or single life.

Help all fathers to be a support and good example to other fathers.

May their entire family spend eternity with You through the gift of Your Son Jesus the Christ. Amen.

HYMN GOD of OUR FATHERS

God of our fathers, Whose almighty hand
Leads forth in beauty all the starry band
Of shining worlds in splendor through the skies
Our grateful songs before Thy throne arise.

Thy love divine hath led us in the past,
In this free land by Thee our lot is cast,
Be Thou our Ruler, Guardian, Guide and Stay,
Thy Word our law, Thy paths our chosen way.

From war's alarms, from deadly pestilence,
Be Thy strong arm our ever sure defense;
Thy true religion in our hearts increase,
Thy bounteous goodness nourish us in peace.

Refresh Thy people on their toilsome way,
Lead us from night to never ending day;
Fill all our lives with love and grace divine,
And glory, laud, and praise be ever Thine.



Saint John Baptist de La Salle,
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
help us to hold in respect all fathers of families.

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!

