



Celebrating **Fatherhood**

A parish kit for Father's Day

Gift of the

Fathers

A resource from the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life.

The Gift of Fathers

A letter to parish personnel

Fathers Day
September 6th 2009

In a nutshell

Aim of this communication :

- Affirmation of fathers, specifically on Fathers' Day

Broad Strategy

- Strengthen family life
- Affirm the family as a major resource for evangelization.

This kit contains :

1. A reproducible leaflet *'Thinking about Fatherhood'**
2. Notes for the liturgies around Father's Day.
3. Newsletter inserts.

* Ideally, copies of this leaflet could be provided to parishioners attending Mass on Father's Day

Thank you for
celebrating the
gift of fathers



Dear Friends,

There has been a trend towards increasing news stories about fathers in recent years.

There continue to be reports of prominent public figures who resign their positions to allow more time for their children. There have also been tragic stories about the problems that families face when fathers are absent or unable to meet their responsibilities or have given up hope.

Our faith gives us new hope and 'new eyes' to see Christ present in the ordinary events of daily life. It is often in the 'ordinary' things that we discover the sacred and the profound.

It is with such 'new eyes' that we appreciate the contributions that the father makes to family life. He is more than just 'another parent'. Through his male presence and his relationship with the mother, he complements her unique parental role in a special way.

Recent sociological studies confirm that at every stage of child development, the father has a specific role to play. It is important that this role is appropriately developed and supported.

The enclosed Father's Day Kit is offered for use around Father's Day. It is simple and practical and offers material for use in liturgies and newsletters. It is another resource in the continued efforts to strengthen family life.

Our hope is that parishes will encourage their families to grow in awareness of fatherhood by assisting with the distribution of these ideas and stories on 'being Dad' in our world today.

Thank you for your ongoing support for families.

Yours in Christ,

Bishop Eugene Hurley
Chairman, Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life

Liturgy Outline

Introduction

Today is Father's Day and we rejoice in God's gift of fatherhood. We experience God especially through the people in our lives. Fatherhood is one particular expression of that.

Penitential Rite

We come to the Father through Jesus, so as members of his body, the Church, we pray:

Lord, you show your love in the caring of those who gave us life.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, you make us sons and daughters of the Father. Christ have mercy.

Lord, you call us to share your forgiveness and hope. Lord, have mercy.

Prayers of the Faithful

Introduction

As adopted children of the Father, with confidence let us express our deepest needs.

Intercessions

- We pray that we may find ways to show our appreciation of our fathers.
- We pray for all fathers – may they be gentle and strong in their fatherhood.

Conclusion

God of love, you gave us fathers to give life to us and glory to you. May we learn to develop that love with all members of our families and to share that love with others. Amen.

Introduction to the Lord's Prayer

Jesus called his Father 'Abba'. In the same intimate way, let us pray to the Father using his words:

Final Blessing

May your relationships with your fathers be marked by appreciation and love. Amen.

May the intimate love of Jesus for the Father lead you to be a sign of his love for others. Amen.

And may the blessing of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be upon you and your family forever. Amen.

The Gift of Fathers

Notes for the Liturgy

Homily Ideas

Today, Father's Day, is a good time to pause to appreciate a unique person that God has put in our lives – our father.

It is easy to take our fathers for granted. The natural hurts that arise in all families can cause us to forget the wealth of goodness and commitment that is also there.

Today is an opportunity to recall and affirm the particular gifts that fathers bring to families. This includes our own personal fathers, grandfathers, single parent fathers, and children or brothers who are fathers.

(Share some positive memories of your own father and include some ways in which you have shown, or intend to show, your appreciation of your father.)

There is no one 'right' way of showing appreciation of one's father. The important thing is to do it. When expressing thanks to your dad it is a good idea to connect it with something specific – a specific quality or a specific incident in the past that typified your father's care or commitment.

People can give presents if they wish but the most important gift is the gift of appreciation. Every father knows that he is human and didn't always do it perfectly. He needs to hear from his children that he 'must have done something right' – maybe magnificently.

Also, it doesn't have to stop with Father's Day. You can continue to thank and affirm your father for his fatherhood – on his birthday, his feast day, or at times of special events in your or his life.



How to use this kit

The basics:

1. Photocopy the handout Thinking about Fatherhood and distribute at Sunday Mass on Father's Day.
2. Consult liturgy notes for Father's Day.
3. Consider adding clipboard items in bulletin on Father's Day ... and beyond

Additional suggestions:

Invite an 'enthusiast' for fatherhood or for family life to help organise the celebration of Father's Day in the parish e.g.

- Greet people as they enter church and hand out the leaflet *Thinking about Fatherhood*.
- Dress the altar with symbols of fatherhood, e.g a briefcase, football, children's books.
- Ask dad and his children to present the offertory gifts.
- Invite 1-3 parishioners to share briefly what they appreciate about their fathers at the end of Mass.
- Get the Children's Liturgy catechists to answer the question: How do I know that my Dad loves me.
- Host coffee/brunch after Mass.

Bulletin Clipboard

Further thoughts for Father's Day... and beyond

Thank God for fathers!

Fatherhood – like motherhood – is all about creation. Let's be creative ourselves as we celebrate Father's Day. See handout 'Thinking about Fatherhood' for suggestions ... see if we can expand on these.

Abba, Father!

The history of the Jews is the story of a loving God and his people. However, Jesus brought a new dimension to this relationship, calling God by the affectionate term 'Abba'. Through Jesus, we too share in this special relationship.

Rom 8:15

Every father is different

'Designer cards': The best Father's Day card is the one you write for him, telling him of his particular qualities that are important to you.

A Father's Day suggestion

Choose three photos of yourself with your father at different stages of your life. On the back, write a few words about how the photo reminds you of some quality that you appreciate in your father.

Absent Dads

Write to your father. Sometimes the most effective communication is the gentle reminder, a loving reminder that you are still his child.

Further ideas for parishes

- Guest speaker to speak on fatherhood in the week before or after Father's Day.
- A 'father and daughter dance' in the parish (or organised through the school with parish support).
- Ask parishioners to bring a favourite photo of their father for placing on notice board at back of church.
- Prior to Father's Day, suggest parishioners invite their father to join them for Mass on Father's Day.

