

Dear Friends,

Happy Father's Day! It is a day to thank God for our fathers and the special blessings that they are in our lives. Fathers should never be taken for granted.

Some of the most important and useful lessons in life I have learned from my father. In fact, much of who I am today I owe to the influence my father had in my life. When I was a lad growing up, you could often find me at my father's side; sometimes voluntarily and sometimes not so much so. Whatever the case may have been, I gained a lot from those moments we spent together.

From my dad, I learned about cars. On many occasions, I stood beside him as he leaned over the engine of one of our cars, tinkering with this or that. Sometimes he changed the oil. Other times he adjusted the timing belt. On other occasions he replaced spark plugs, fixed starters, or replaced hoses. Quite often, he let me help. If it weren't for him, I would have never have been able to replace the alternator on my truck during my seminary days, or change a flat tire when I found a nail in it. If it weren't for my father, I would not have had the gumption to replace my own car battery or give my car a tune-up. It is amazing how valuable these skills have become.

From my dad, I learned creativity. He was a commercial graphic artist by trade and I used to sit next to him and watch him come up with designs out of his head. I spent countless hours watching him draw, do calligraphy, or make layouts for publications. His imagination amazed me.

I also learned problem solving from my dad. Occasionally, a yard tool would break, or something would get stuck and he always found a way to remedy the situation or rig things in such a way that he could still use them. He still loves to tinker with electronics, and seems to find ways to get things to work.

If you have ever noticed that I have a good sense of humor, then you could probably attribute it to my father. He was always good at saying funny things or keeping things light-hearted. Sometimes I lament the fact that my humor is as corny as my father's.

Values have always been important to my father. From him I learned the importance of commitment, generosity, involvement, perseverance, and most importantly, faith. He has always been involved in church and has given his time, talent, and treasure for the greater good of God's kingdom. For more than 40 years, he was involved in church choir. He has always been a gentleman to others - exhibiting Christ-like respect to everyone and following through on his commitments. I have tried to emulate these characteristics.

What have you learned from your father? If you are a father, how conscious are you of how much influence you have on your children? The model of all fathers, except for St. Joseph, is our ultimate Father in heaven. He never ceases to love us and provide for our well-being. He always cares for us. May we never fail to praise Him for the example that our earthly fathers give to us! God bless!

Fr. Paul