

THE MISSION OF A DAD

Dads can have a great influence. As children, a child sees and picks up on subtle ways a Dad does things. They know the priorities their fathers have and they know the lines that should not be crossed. There is no one way of parenting and there are always words that were spoken that can never be taken back. Today we honor the efforts made, not the degree of perfection, we honor the support, not its absence, and we honor the sacrifices, not the disappointments. These days are an invitation for us to see the good that was there at the start. My dad was hard-working but never wanted to be a supervisor or a boss. He was an assistant Scoutmaster, but would never lead the troop. He found joy being in the background and not in the forefront. These gifts were uniquely his. It was his smile and grin that spoke to the world, long before he uttered a word. He spoke little of the hardships he experienced in war and believed that loyalty mattered. I learned a lot from him; most importantly I saw how he loved my mom and would follow her anywhere and everywhere. While this is not everyone's experience, it is mine. On this day I honor the effort, the sacrifices and the support I received from a person of faith.

On this day may we honor all fathers; biological, adoptive, grandfathers, godfathers and those who are father figures to us. May God bless them and guide them.



Father John

VALIDATING OUR INTEGRITY AND VALUE

What does it mean to us when a teacher expresses that we are making progress and all the hard work is paying off? What does it mean to us when a coach compliments our discipline in the sport? From baseball to volleyball, football to gymnastics, a word of encouragement validates what we are feeling. It has a special significance that we are important and confirms what we are doing has a purpose. Our instincts are validating when we are truthful about ourselves and another person validates what we are expressing. Value and integrity are validating mostly when we feel we are heard and understood. Many of the outcries in society that find a need for expression have created a voice on social media. They have made signs and have gone to the streets. They want to be heard and feel that they are not. They long to be validated. Everyone wants to have their experience validated. Everyone wants to know that their life has worth and value. The need seems to be the greatest when fear is involved. Struggle happens when the unheard feel threatened. That threat can take on many forms.

In today's Gospel, the disciples are in a panic. They are gripped with a fear as the storm takes over the sea. They want to know that their lives have meaning. They want to know that they have a mission in the Kingdom of God. They wake Jesus and the words they say to Him are very telling, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" They are not worried about Him, rather they are asking if their lives have worth and meaning. They are asking if they matter. Jesus immediately lets them know that they do. He rebukes the wind and the waves. He calms the storm. It is not just amazing that He spoke to nature to be settled, but more importantly, He immediately sent a message that their lives were worth saving, and they have value.

We are invited to allow this same Jesus to validate our lives and embrace us and remind us that each and everyone one of us has value. We are all a part of the mission of God. We all have eternal value. At a time where many are searching to know that they are important and special, Jesus is the source who longs to validate our need to know we are significant, we are worth saving for all eternity. That is the greatest gift. When Jesus died on the cross to save us, for the forgiveness of sin, He also sent a message to the whole world that we have value. We are worth saving. In our moments of uncertainty, where do we run? In our moments when we feel we do not make a difference, where do we seek validation? Jesus is here to tell all of us, we are worth saving.



Father John Ouper