



Father,

This is a request for you to participate in the ***Honor Your Father 3-Point Parish Challenge***. Below is an overview of the initiative. Attached is a specific challenge to be issued to each man as well as an outline to reference for a Father's Day homily.

The **3-Point Parish Challenge** is a campaign to help raise the bar for fathering across generations in the parish. Please prayerfully consider issuing a call (specifics on reverse) for each man in the parish to:

- **Make time to meet** with their father or a father-figure and
  - Take a picture of the two of them meeting; and/or
  - Record a short video testimony of what the exchange meant to them.Share the pictures and videos with the congregation leading up to Father's Day.
- **Write a letter** of thanks to their dad citing a specific positive experience or two growing up.
  - Compile excerpts from the letters to share with the church leading up to Father's Day.
- **Commit to grow as a father** – to be a study of the Father and of fathering.
  - Challenge them to complete the *Dads Becoming Heroes* study;
  - Encourage capturing short video testimonies of how the study impacted them; and
  - Record a video testimony of a family on the study's impact from their perspective.Share the videos with the congregation to encourage others to accept the challenge.

Our prayer is that you will see dads affirmed, father-son relationships strengthened and cross-generational discussions happening among your men around the topic of fathering. Comfort zones will be challenged as men step forward in honoring their father. Some will embrace the challenge and move forward quickly. Some will pray for months that the Lord softens hearts for that first meeting to occur. And, of course others have lost their dad or have no access to their dad. Point being that this challenge has no end point. It is a beginning to create enthusiasm around fathering, encouraging and equipping men to be the dad they are called to be.

Exodus 20:12 gives us the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment, "*Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.*" This has been referred to as the "forgotten commandment". The commandment with a promise is not to be forgotten. It not only provides the bridge between the first three commands to the last six, it provides the bridge between the spiritual relationship with God to the physical relationships with others and the bridge for faith to be passed from one generation through dad and mom to the next. There is a generational connection, even generational healing as father and mother are honored.

As parishes across the diocese accept this challenge, the Church will see hearts of fathers turned to their children and the hearts of children turned to their fathers. Challenge each man to ***Honor Your Father*** and let the heart-turning begin.

By His Grace,

Rick Wertz  
President – Faithful Fathering

## **Honor Your Father: 3-Point Parish Challenge**

The Lord said, “Honor your father and your mother” – which is the first commandment with a promise – “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” (Ephesians 6:2-3). This has been referred to as the “forgotten commandment” perhaps because Jesus summed up the 10 commandments into two – “Love the Lord Your God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your mind. ... Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37,39). But Jesus walked the fourth commandment, honoring His Father every step of His journey on this earth “so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” (John 14:13). The commandment with a promise is not to be forgotten. It not only provides the bridge between the first three commands to the last six, it provides the bridge between the spiritual relationship with God to the physical relationships with others and the bridge for faith to be passed from one generation through dad and mom to the next. There is a generational connection, even generational healing as father and mother are honored.

### **A call to each man in the Parish:**

- **Make time to meet** with your father. Do something he enjoys but make sure the time incorporates discussion around what life experiences shaped him as a father and the challenges he faced “being Dad” when you were a kid. *(If your dad has passed or is not accessible, meet with another man in the church close to the age of your father or a younger dad that could be a son and have the same generational discussion.)*
  - Take a picture of the two of you; and/or
  - Record a short video testimony of what the exchange meant to you
- **Write a letter** of thanks to your dad citing a specific experience or two growing up. It can be as simple as a “Thanks for bringing me into this world” or as comprehensive as a tribute to your dad that acknowledges time committed through your childhood years and the support provided. If you are convicted of taking him for granted or of passing judgment on him due to perceived shortfalls acknowledge that and confess. Keep the focus on honoring your father with full respect for the life journey that shaped his perspective on fathering. Present the letter to your dad and read it to him. *(If your dad has passed or is not accessible, read the letter to your kids and include a story about your dad they may not have heard.)*
  - Share an excerpt from the letter with another man or group of men in the Parish;
  - Compile excerpts from others to share with the Parish
- **Commit to grow** as a father – be a study of the Father and of fathering. Seek out resources and training opportunities that will encourage & equip you as a father. Commit to completing one study for dads across the summer. A couple of easy and accessible options are the *Dads Becoming Heroes* or *Dads Armor* that can be done on your own or in a small group. The study can be downloaded and viewed at <https://faithfulfathering.org/for-dads>. Take the initiative to **Honor Your Father** through intentional study to become the father God calls you to be, the father the next generation needs.
  - Take a picture of you doing the study on your own, with a buddy or in a group;
  - Record a short video testimony of how the study impacted you; and
  - Record a short video with testimony from your family on how the study influenced your fathering from their perspective.

Accept this challenge to **Honor Your Father** and begin a journey that will be challenging and affirming, convicting and encouraging. In the process, you will be equipped and strengthened to become the father you are called to be, the father the next generation needs.

Prayers are with you on the journey,



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## **Honor Your Father: 3-Point Parish Challenge**

**Homily Outline** for reference:

As you know, a number of weeks ago we initiated an **Honor Your Father** challenge to dads. The emotions around the topic of our dads run the spectra from elation, “I really appreciate being issued this challenge while my dad is alive”, to frustration, “Are you kidding me? My dad was abusive. I have not spoken to him in years and I don’t see any reason to honor him!” Actually, there is a very important reason to honor our father and mother, it is the fifth commandment. Exodus 20:12 does not say, “If” your father and mother are honorable then honor them ...

The first step of the challenge was for dads to make time to meet with their dads. If a dad had passed or was not accessible, men were to meet with another man of that generation to talk specifically about the challenges he had faced as a dad. One dad said that when he called to arrange a lunch for his discussion, his dad asked, “What’s wrong?” Dads always want to fix things! Men tend to be much more comfortable “doing & performing” than “being & relating”. From the pictures and dialogues shared with me, many of you have been touched by the initiative taken to meet with your dad or father-figure ...

The second step of the challenge was to write a letter to dad. I personally found this very emotional as I reflected on experiences with my dad. I took way too much for granted growing up and needed to ask forgiveness for that. He was very gracious in granting forgiveness and there was healing, some rough edges in our relationship were smoothed out. Others of you ...

The third step of the challenge is to **Honor Your Father** by continuing to grow in your walk as a father. Many of you have already initiated a study on your own or with a small group. Your intentionality to become the father you are called to be, the father the next generation needs, is what the Lord God was speaking of when He said He would, “*Turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers.*” (Malachi 4:6). Let the heart-turning begin ...

Reviewing this 3-point challenge you see a physical component – “make time to meet with...”, an emotional component – “write a letter of thanks ...” and a spiritual component – “Commit to grow, to be a study of the Father ...”. It is not happenstance that the three points reflect the triune nature of God – the Son, the Counselor and the Father. When our Father shares the moniker “father” with dads He grants each dad the opportunity to reflect His triune nature in the home. It is more than an opportunity. It is a responsibility for each man to be His representative in family by prioritizing physical presence, being engaged emotionally and leading spiritually by example.

The Lord said, “*Honor your father and your mother*” – which is the first commandment with a promise – “*so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.*” (Ephesians 6:2-3). This has been referred to as the “forgotten commandment”. The commandment with a promise is not to be forgotten. It not only provides the bridge between the first three commands to the last six, it provides the bridge between the spiritual relationship with God to the physical relationships with others and the bridge for faith to be passed from one generation through dad and mom to the next. There is a generational connection, even generational healing as father and mother are honored.

The **Honor Your Father 3-Point Challenge** does not end on Father’s Day. I encourage you to continue the journey of honoring your father, father-in-law, father-figures by meeting regularly, writing letters and growing as a father, and watch the Father turn hearts as only He can.

Let’s pray...