

SAID ED June 15, 2008

Fatherhood

This weekend we celebrate Fathers Day. It's a day in which we honor our fathers for helping us become the people we are today. Our culture still tolerates the stereotypical models of masculinity that do such an injustice to what it really means to be a man. TV commercials often depict men as somewhat dull and boring duds who no kid would want to be proud of. Too bad! That's not my experience by far.

I see Dads around our parish working closely with their kids, being affectionate and gentle as well as strong and firm when circumstances call for it. I am pleased to see many young fathers nurturing their children in ways that were not looked upon as "manly" a generation ago.

I'll never forget a recent issue of Time Magazine which carried a clever announcement. It featured a beautiful little baby wrapped up in a white comforter. Attached to the comforter was a little tag similar that you find attached to bedding or furniture. It read: INSTRUCTIONS: Dad's please read carefully before raising...this is a baby, it needs you, it needs your love, your touch and your time. Spend lots of time with it, build a bird house, read a book, go for a walk, do homework, play. The more time you spend, the better the chance it has of growing up happy and healthy. It grows very quickly, pay attention; never underestimate the difference that you make. At the bottom of the tag there was a line that I liked very much. It read: "It takes a man to be a Dad".

This little ad was sponsored by the national fatherhood initiative, which you can check out at www.fatherhood.org or 1-800-790-DADS. I really appreciated the ad and its message. This weekend, as we celebrate Father's Day in our land, I write to affirm that powerful plan of God: We need our Dads. Our Dads are God's gift to us.

Fathers: I encourage you to spend time with your children. Help them become the people that God has created them and each of us to be.

We all have a Dad who is a gift from God. So..., maybe your Dad wasn't as good a Dad as he could be and as you certainly deserved. Don't use that as an excuse for failing to be a great Dad yourself. Father's come in all shapes and sizes, persuasions and ways of life. Each has a unique gift to pass on to his children. Men, please except this challenge and recognize that the Lord is working in you and through you to form your children in the image and likeness of God.

Have a great Father's Day and a wonderful week!
