

Alfred Marciano

January 12, 1923 to March 9, 2018

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Your Excellency, Bishop Evans, *Reverend Monsignorii*, Reverend Fathers and Deacons, Religious Sisters and Brothers, Al and Nancy, Matthew and Courtney, Katie and Chris, Mary and Justin, Uncle Orlando, Auntie Elsie and Uncle Nick, members of our families, Your Honor Mayor Avedisian, and other distinguished civic, police, fire, and military leaders, both active and retired, Mr. Irving and Mrs. Dwyer and faculty and staff of St. Benedict and St. Kevin Parish and School, my dear brothers and sisters In Christ,

Allow me first, on behalf of my brother Al and our entire family, to offer a word of thanks to all of you and the many beyond these walls for the love, care, and kindness that you have extended to us these last several days since the passing of my father. A special word of thanks to you, Bishop Evans, and to my brother priests who take time today out of their very busy lives to honor my father and our family with their presence. But let me give full disclosure here, lest you think the number of priests has just to do with me and our fraternity. You see, my brother is a CPA and a very devout Catholic and he never charges priest to do their tax returns. Need I say more? Actually, Al, after that announcement your list of clergy clients may go up even more!

But all of you here with us today and last night, priests and faithful alike, demonstrate to us what we always knew: that my dad was, and always will be, an exceptional man of faith, family, and hard work who touched so many lives with his quiet and kind disposition and his colorful and fun way of living. The readings and the Gospel this morning were chosen because they speak so clearly of him. From Old Testament to New, the secret of a good life is NO secret at all. It is timeless and lasting. And a good and virtuous man is a blessing, as enunciated by Our Blessed Lord in His famous and moving Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes that we all still treasure.

These recent days as he slowly left us have been cause for us to reflect on his long and good life and his special love for my late mother whom he missed so much since she left us some

27 years ago. In fact, he recently commented to me, *“Robert, I don’t know why the Lord has forgotten me and has not answered my prayers to go to be with your mother.”* To which I replied, *“Dad, do you think mom has anything to do with that?”*

It was a storybook romance, beginning as youthful neighbors in an alley on Federal Hill called Louisbourg Place and blossoming into a love and mutual admiration that lasted a lifetime, inspiring Al and me as we grew, and all those who knew my parents. Long before it was fashionable or even encouraged for men to assist with household chores, our memories remain vivid of our dad coming home from a long day of work (including many hours of overtime), putting down his lunch pail on the back step, and gathering up the clothes hanging and drying in the backyard. And before there was a term known as “working mother,” when my mother’s long-awaited and requested addition to her kitchen was being built by my father, you could see one shovel of dirt at a time coming up from the foundation during the day as she did her own part to help him in this task while he was at work. It was simple acts and events like these and so many others that captured the love they had for each other and that they showered on us so generously and showed to all whom they knew, from the moment of our birth until they left us.

And so today, as we bring my father one last time to Saint Kevin Church where he came each week for Mass and many joy-filled events—most recently the christening of his three great-grandchildren—we return him to the Good Lord who first gave him to us so many years ago. And we do so as people of faith, the faith that he and my mother gave us, quietly lived, and clearly showed us. Our hearts are swelled with gratitude to the Good Lord and to this kind, happy and loving gentleman to whom some of us here in church owe our very existence.

You know, my father’s long and good life is due in large part to my brother, Al, who lived just down the street from him not far from here, and to whose house my dad visited several times a day for many reasons. But first among them was to be sure that nothing was being thrown out in the trash that was still good. He was from a generation that wasted nothing and was often seen by his many friends and neighbors going up Hess Avenue back to his house with the treasured find of the day! My brother Al also inspired us as a loyal and faithful son—he was my dad’s driver for family events, his fashion and financial adviser, his evening meal provider, and his second favorite son!

But as much as we basked in the glow of being his children, the real joys of his life came from his grandchildren, their spouses, and his three great-grandchildren, Roma, Spencer and Julian. And that feeling was always mutual. Grandpa was at the center of all our family events, many though they were, and always provided us with his good cheer, his ready smile, and his quick and witty comments that will stay with us for the rest of our lives.

When his eye doctor was examining his eyes and said, *"Mr. Marciano, I am going to look at the back of your eyes now,"* he replied, *"Did you want me to turn around?"* Or, most recently, when I brought the hospice nurse up to his room and woke him up to say, *"Dad, this is Mary the nurse."* She politely said, *"Mr. Marciano, it's very nice to meet you. Do you have any pain?"* He said with a smile, *"Yes. He's standing right next to you."*

Or a few weeks ago, after he had given his car keys to Al saying he was no longer going to drive, that my sister-in-law Nancy arrived early at his house to find the car gone from the driveway. She left and spent a few moments down the street at my brother's then went back to my father's house at 11:15 a.m. not the scheduled 11 a.m. As my father opened the door with a smile to greet her he said, *"Nancy, you're late."* She replied, *"No, dad, I was here at 10:30 a.m. but your car was gone."* He quickly said, *"Don't tell Alfred!"*

And so my friends, now you can see why we are sad. Grateful that we had him for so long and in such good health, but sad that he is not going to be with us brightening our lives with his smile, his kindness, and his many quiet and often hidden good deeds for his family, his neighbors, and his many friends.

But today, and always, we recall the finest homily ever preached. From the pulpit of a cross where a roaming Rabbi and Divine Savior stretched out his arms and bowed His head in death so that just three days later and from the darkness of a tomb He would destroy death forever. And not just for Him, but for my father and for all like him who would hear and live His Gospel of love.

So today, and in all the days to come, we must be thankful that the Almighty saw fit to send this good and kind man to us and give us a glimpse of His eternal love through my dad's love and now to grant his wish of many years to, as he put it, make that one last move to be with his

beloved wife Mary, in what he called *that condo in Cranston*—his creative words for their grave at Saint Ann’s Cemetery.

And so, my friends, last Friday night surrounded by the love of his family here, especially my-sister-in law Nancy, (who lived up to the title my mother gave her years ago as the “daughter she never had” and who was with my father daily these last few months), his grandchildren and their spouses, who even in their very busy lives, inspired us all and never left his side, he closed his eyes for one last time in a beautiful and peaceful death. We know by our great and enduring faith in our Risen Savior that just seconds later he opened them on another shore, to be greeted by the Good Lord Himself and to finally be with the one he missed so much and to whom he had pledged his love at Holy Ghost Church on September 6, 1952. The vow he spoke that day, “*until death do us part,*” was now fulfilled and they were finally parted no longer.

Yes, my dear friends, the seat at the head of our family table which my father always proudly assumed will now be empty. But we know that a seat at the Marciano/DiTata celebration in a heavenly place, in the Italian section, has now been filled and that is a celebration that will last forever.

May his good and noble soul now rest in peace. AMEN.