

A Father's Day Tribute: To Mr. Alfred Marciano and All Fathers

JUNE 17, 2018—The date was 1951, the occasion was my mother's birthday on August 27, and a card was sent from 2 Louisbourg Place, Prov # 9 to 1 Louisbourg Place Providence, # 9—a house literally across an alley way in Federal Hill. It reads as follows:

(FRONT) For you Sweetheart on your birthday, with all my love

(INSIDE) My one and only sweetheart, that's what you'll always be, for no one else could ever mean. One half as much to me.

And so it is with all my heart, that I am wishing you, A very happy birthday dear, and many of them too – (signed) FRED

It was mailed FIRST CLASS with 21 cents of postage. These past few months, as you may guess, we have been slowly going through my father's house since he left us on March 9th of this year. It has not been an easy task, as many of you know from your own experience. There are many memories and a lifetime of cherished items, but it has been inspirational in many ways as well. This card was saved by my mother and kept in her cedar chest for 67 years and saved by my father since her passing in 1990. It captures the essence of my father's life, his love, and devotion to my mother from when they first started dating. This Father's Day, is the very first time that I am not able to have my father stand up at Mass to be acknowledged, something I loved to do, and something he hated to do, given his quiet and private disposition. In fact, one year I asked him, "Dad, what should I give the fathers of the parish as a gift on Father's Day this year?" To which he quickly replied, "How about no homily!"

But this beautiful and thoughtful greeting card bought, signed, sent, received, and cherished for over 6 decades tells of a different time and era, where good things mattered, and life and its pleasures were simple and lasting. Family life was sound and secure, faith was practiced and lived, and what was virtuous was emulated and rewarded. It causes us to reflect that **good husbands** make **good fathers**, and give a perfect example to their children, especially their sons, on what **fatherhood** should look like. It began a long time ago with a good and decent and righteous man named Joseph who protected a young maiden named Mary, and gave her Son, a very special boy named Jesus, a home filled with love and goodness. That child learned His lessons well, for He went on to do the same for the world and for all of history.

St. Joseph was my father's favorite saint and they were much alike. My dad was a carpenter, he married a woman named Mary, and as my seminary classmates would often joke, they had a son who thought he was the Messiah.

My friends, how blessed my family has been these many years to have our patriarch with us. And his good and loving example as a father he passed on, and if you know my brother, Al, you know what I mean. And Al has passed it onto his son, my nephew Matthew—a wonderful and very proud father of three. That's how it works, that's how it is supposed to work, and how blessed we all are when it does.

And so, this Father's Day, let us be grateful for the man in our life who has that honor and that title, imperfect though he may be, we have life because of him. And to all fathers in our parish, thank you for passing along the wonderful and lasting vocation of **fatherhood**—not in what you say, but in who you are—for it is a lasting gift to your children that will endure for all time.

God love you.