



*Serving the Spiritual Needs of Grieving Parents
Whose Children of Any Age Have Died by Any Cause,
No Matter How Long Ago*

**Your Emmaus Ministry
Remote Retreat Guide
June 20 , 2020
9:30am EDT**



Father's Day

Honoring Our Earthly Fathers and Our Heavenly Father

The parable of the merciful father (prodigal son) is a metaphor for Christian life. The father teaches his sons the way they should live; he gives them freedom to spend their inheritance as they choose. And he is always ready to forgive. He runs out to meet the repentant while he is still a long way off.

This way of understanding of "the fatherhood of God" is the source of Christian hope for eternal life. We speak to the transcendent and all-holy God as children speak, with complete trust, to a loving father."

--Pope Francis

Preparation:

Ahead of time, we recommend you find a quiet place in your home where you can immerse yourself in this retreat. Have your child's Emmaus Memorial Candle (or other candle) available along with a lighter or matches.

Take several deep breaths to cleanse your thoughts and open yourself to wherever the Holy Spirit is calling you today several minutes before the retreat is scheduled to begin.

At 9:30am EDT (our normal retreat beginning time) open your email and join other fellow Emmaus Parent Companions in getting away from the rest of the world, at least for a time, to focus on God and on your precious child.

CANDLE LIGHTING PRAYER (Light your candle)

We begin... In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen

Lord, you are the Light of the World. *Help us feel your presence in the lighting of this candle.*

Lord, you gave us the gift of our children. *Help us feel their presence in the lighting of this candle.*

Lord, you gave us the hope of eternal life. *Help us confirm that hope in the lighting of this candle.*

Lord, you gave us love. *Help us to know that, as much as we love our children, you love them even more.*

We ask you this through Christ, Our Lord
Amen.

OPENING SONG: [Good, Good Father](#)

It's Who You Are... And I am loved by you

PRAYER OF THOSE MAKING A RETREAT

Loving Spirit of Wisdom,
Guide my thoughts and my memories.

In the light of your love,
May I see what is important for me to remember,
What is important for me to hold to my heart,
And what I need to simply let go of in peace.

I trust you to be my guide,

Even when the path seems unclear to me.

We pray this in the name of Your Son, the Healer,
Our Lord, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Scripture

References in Scripture to God, the Father, help us to understand something of the love of God, which is infinitely greater, more faithful, and more total than the love of any earthly man.

"What man of you", Jesus asks in order to show the disciples the Father's face, "will give his son a stone if he asks for bread? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" (Mt 7:9-11; cf. Lk 11:11-13).

God is our Father because he blessed us and chose us before the creation of the world (cf. Eph 1:3-6), he has really made us his children in Jesus (cf. 1 Jn 3:1). And as Father, God accompanies our lives with love, giving us his Word, his teaching, his grace and his Spirit.

As Jesus revealed – he is the Father who feeds the birds of the air that neither sow nor reap, and arrays the flowers of the field in marvelous colors, in robes more beautiful than those of Solomon himself (cf. Mt 6:26-32; Lk 12:24-28); and we, Jesus added, are worth far more than the flowers and the birds of the air!

And if he is so good that he "makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Mt 5:45), we shall always be able, without fear and with total confidence, to entrust ourselves to his forgiveness as Father whenever we err.

God is a good Father who welcomes and embraces his lost but repentant son (cf. Lk 15:11ff.), who gives freely to those who ask him (cf. Mt 18:19; Mk 11:24; Jn 16:23), and offers the bread of heaven and the living water that wells up to eternal life (cf. Jn 6:32, 51, 58).

God is our Father, giving us the Spirit that makes us sons and enables us to call him, in truth "Abba, Father!" (cf. Rom 8:15). It is for this reason that Jesus, teaching us to pray, invites us to say "Our Father" (Mt 6:9-13; cf. Lk 11:2-4).

This is the true, authentic and perfect divine power: to respond to evil not with evil but with good, to insults with forgiveness, to homicidal hatred with life-giving love. Thus evil is truly vanquished because it is cleansed by God's love; thus death is defeated once and for all because it is transformed into a gift of life. God the Father raises the Son: death, the great enemy (cf. 1 Cor 15:26), is engulfed and deprived of its sting (cf. 1 Cor 15:54-55), and we, delivered from sin, can have access to our reality as children of God.

God is a Father who never abandons his children, a loving Father who supports, helps, welcomes, pardons and saves with a faithfulness that surpasses by far that of men and women, opening onto dimensions of eternity. "For his steadfast love endures forever", as Psalm 136 [135] repeats in every verse, as in a litany, retracing the history of salvation. The love of God the Father never fails, he does not tire of us; it is a love that gives to the end, even to the sacrifice of his Son.

Excerpted from "*I Believe in God: The Almighty Father*"
General Audience, 2013, Pope Benedict XVI

REFLECTION #1: [*A Grief Unveiled: One Father's Journey through the Death of a Child \(excerpt\)*](#)

"The Eucharist is like a laser that cuts through the veil that separates us from those we love."



Take a moment to pause... breathe... savor what you have received from the Reflection #1.

Clear your mind before focusing on Reflection #2.

REFLECTION #2: [Grieving the Loss of a Child on Father's Day](#) by Greg Laurie
"How does a person get through such a dark and difficult time? I'll tell you what helps me..."

PRAYER FOR FATHERS

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name.

Thank you for all of the fathers who came before us--and sacrificed so much so that we could be who and what we are today.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on Earth as it is in heaven.

Help us to understand that fathers everywhere are trying their best to do their best, no matter what.

Give us this day our daily bread.

Give all of our fathers everywhere whatever they need to love their children--unconditionally,

And forgive us our trespasses

Whatever they are...

As we forgive those who trespass against us.

Help fathers everywhere know and understand the beautiful, redeeming qualities of forgiving their children and others.

And deliver us from evil.

Deliver our fathers, O Lord, from every evil, so that they can be shining examples of your fatherly love every day.

We ask you this for all of our fathers, grandfathers, and fathers-to be

In the name of the Father, our comforter,

The Son, our hope,

And the Holy Spirit, our guide.

Amen.

CLOSING SONG: [I Will See You Again](#)

You never really went away.

CLOSING BLESSING

Let us end our time of retreat...united with Brother John Maganzini, OFM and the Franciscan Friars at Saint Anthony Shrine in Boston, MA by blessing one another.

Raise your right hand and, together, let us pray...

Loving Father, thank you reating us and adopting us as your sons and daughters through Baptism. And thank you for your unwavering mercy and forgiveness of our sins.

As your loving sons and daughters, in total trust, we ask you this day to bless us by keeping our

precious children safe with you. Help them feel the depths of our continuing unconditional love for them.

And, comfort us with the knowledge that we truly *are*--and will be--their fathers (mothers) forever. And that someday we will all be home together again.

We ask all of this in your name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Amen



FOR FURTHER REFLECTION...

[I Believe in God: The Father Almighty by](#)

[Pope Benedict XVI \(full address\)](#)

[God Reaches Out to Adam and to Us: A Reflection on Fatherhood in Michaelangelo's Painting](#)

You will receive a new email next Friday.

**Please join your fellow
Emmaus Parent Companions
again next Saturday at 9:30am EDT**

**Until then, may God bless you and keep you.
Sending many warm, virtual hugs**

For past Remote Retreats, see [here](#).

REMINDER

We have concluded our
Emmaus Ministry LIVE Virtual Gathering Series.
If you were not able to join us for our Reflections
--or would like to see them again--
you can access these inspiring talks [here](#).

