



This weekend, on 6 Sept, we celebrate Father's Day - a day we honour fathers and father figures of this and past generations as well as recognising their influence in society.

BACKGROUND OF FATHER'S DAY

Some have suggested that the concept of Father's Day may have originated in pagan sun worship. In some branches of paganism, they recognise the Sun as the father of the universe. Although, Father's Day in Australia occurs on the first Sunday of September, Father's Day in other countries falls on the third Sunday of June, which is close to the June solstice.

For Catholics, a customary day for the celebration of fatherhood is known to date back to at least 1508. Celebrated on 19 March, Father's Day coincided with the Feast of St. Joseph who is referred to as the fatherly *Nutritor Domini* ("Nourisher of the Lord").

However, the secular Father's Day that is celebrated throughout the world today was established in the early 20th century by an American woman called Sonora Smart Dodd. Inspired by the newly recognised Mother's Day celebrations, she decided to plan a day to honour fathers. Although Sonora Smart Dodd initially suggested the day to be June 5, her father's birthday, the pastors of the Spokane Ministerial Alliance did not have enough time to prepare their sermons, and the celebration was deferred to the third Sunday of June. So, the first Father's Day was celebrated in Spokane, Washington on June 19, 1910.

As with Mother's Day, Father's Day has become increasingly popular throughout the world over the years and is celebrated on different days according to local custom.

REFLECTING ON FATHER'S DAY

When we think of a father, we often think of his strength, his guiding hand, his wisdom and his unfailing assistance. And so, on this day, we must give thanks to our heavenly Father for the gift of our fathers and for his sheltering presence.

God our Father gave up his only Son, Jesus Christ, so that we might be saved through him. He provides an example of the very vocation of fatherhood.

We learn that fathers are to sacrifice their lives for their families. Fathers do this in many ways, including:

- Being the spiritual leader and guardian of their families.
- Praying for and with their families.
- Being a courageous witness to the Gospel.
- Providing care and support for their families.
- Serving as an example of goodness and truth.
- Leading with courage and accountability.
- Laying down one's life for another.

Prayer for *Father's Day*

God our Father,
We give you thanks and praise
for fathers young and old.
We pray for young fathers,
newly embracing their vocation;
May they find courage and perseverance
to balance work, family and faith
in joy and sacrifice.
We pray for Fathers around the world
whose children are lost or suffering;
May they know that the God of compassion
walks with them in their sorrow.
We pray for men who are not fathers
but still mentor and guide us
with fatherly love and advice.
We remember fathers, grandfathers,
and great grandfathers
who are no longer with us
but who live forever in our memory
and nourish us with their love.

Amen.

Therefore, today, in a special way, let us be thankful for our fathers, by birth or adoption, who love us and support us through life.

Let us also be grateful for our Church leaders, who take on the paternal role of guiding us through life.

Finally, let us be appreciative to God, our heavenly Father who will always teach justly and grant us boundless mercy.

