



*June 18, 2009*

**HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN ALEXIOS`  
MESSAGE FOR FATHER`S DAY**

My beloved ones,

This Sunday we have the opportunity to celebrate Father's Day, to recognize and honor the fathers in our lives. Based on our faith and our family experiences, we don't need studies to tell us that a father's involvement with his child's upbringing can have a significant impact on his or her academic achievements and behavior. However we know and there is statistical proof that the closer the father-child relationship, the better the child does in life. Studies show that a father's example is the most powerful influence to help children learn about work, cooperation and responsibility. There is more to being a parent than simply providing food, shelter, and clothing for your children.

Christ challenges us to love one another, and that challenge becomes even more difficult but also more important and compelling within our own families. Even in the best of families, there are hard times, problems and difficulties. That is why fathers are so important.

When a father takes responsibility for his own life and spirituality by being active and involved in the ecclesiastical and liturgical life of our Church, using the tools of prayer, worship, fasting and the study of Holy Scripture, he receives the respect of his family. As he grows in his own spiritual life, he is able to be an example of Christian leadership, compassion and love as a father. Although this may seem impossible for anyone accomplish by themselves, we know that with God's help, we can do all things.

The most important gift that a father can give his children is a loving spiritual and moral foundation. If he fails to pass on this precious gift to his children, they will almost certainly suffer and lose their way in our challenging and difficult world. This is why it is so important to make every effort to lay a spiritual foundation for our children. The spiritual practices of fasting, prayer, Lenten disciplines, Confession and attending services should not only be discussed, but should be practiced as a family. If we are not sharing the love of God with our children, if we are not growing in our own spiritual lives, if we are not bringing them to the Divine Liturgy, then we are failing as fathers and also as disciples of Christ, because encouraging our children to have contact with God's spiritual grace in prayer and worship, in the Divine Liturgy, is the greatest blessing that they can receive.