

I have never played a game of golf in my life, but that is going to change on Saturday, June 28, when I take part in the St. Munchin's golf tournament in Cameron. This is a fundraiser to help pay off refinishing the church floor. When I was a kid, I lived about a mile from a golf course, and two of my brothers worked there as caddies picking up tips. But none of us ever played the game. Jamey McVicker and Dan Earley asked if I would join their team for the St. Munchin's tournament. I thought they wanted a caddy. When they said they need me to play, I said you don't know what you're asking. I don't know the front of a golf club from the back; I think I can identify the top and the bottom. But Jamey and Dan have a lot of confidence in me. They think I'll walk away with the highest score that day.

A lot of dads will take to the links this weekend to celebrate Fathers' Day. A news item this week says that Fathers' Day gifts and cards are changing their tone. Mothers' Day cards are filled with poetic praise, but Fathers' Day cards typically make jokes about how dads snore when they sleep, watch a lot of television, drink beer, go fishing, and play golf – a game they're not very good at. Now some Fathers' Day cards are stressing more positive traits – being a good parent, providing values for the family and the home, and thinking of others ahead of themselves.

Neither fathers nor mothers get all the appreciation they deserve. We call God "Father", and in today's second reading, St. Paul seems especially concerned that we give credit where it is due. Fathers sacrifice for their children; children sometimes disappoint their dads, but good fathers still love them and would even give their lives for their kids. Paul writes, "Only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us." This is an extraordinary example of love and sacrifice.

There are a couple of lessons to be learned from this. One is that God gives us an example of how we are to love others. Even if others are sinners, we imitate God when we love them – not when we approve of their behavior, but when we pray for them and wish the best for them, not rejoicing over their misfortune, but hoping for their change of heart.

The other lesson is that we are often on the receiving end of this kind of love, and it reminds us how much we should appreciate parents, teachers, friends and coworkers who love us even when we don't deserve it. It is one thing to love someone else; it is something else to receive that love when we have misbehaved.

St. Paul says we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son. We expand this reconciliation whenever we forgive those who have offended us, and whenever we turn away from our sin.