

Grace Killian:
Good morning.

Congregation:
Good morning.

Grace Killian:
Welcome to morning prayers. Our responsive reading this morning is Psalm 118, found in your black Appleton Psalter. Please stand.

Grace Killian:
Praise the Lord, for He is good. His steadfast love is eternal.

Congregation:
Let Israel declare, "His steadfast love is eternal."

Grace Killian:
Let the house of Aaron declare, "His steadfast love is eternal."

Congregation:
Let those who fear the Lord declare, "His steadfast love is eternal."

Grace Killian:
In distress I called on the Lord; the Lord answered me and brought me relief.

Congregation:
The Lord is on my side, I have no fear; what can man do to me?

Grace Killian:
Open the gates of victory for me that I may enter them and praise the Lord.

Congregation:
This is the gateway to the Lord; the victorious shall enter through it.

Grace Killian:
I praise You, for You have answered me, and have become my deliverance.

Congregation:
The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

Grace Killian:
This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our sight.

Congregation:

This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us exult and rejoice in it.

Choir:

(singing)

Beth Flaherty:

Things My Father Taught Me. "He taught me how to recognize the wrong things from the right, and chased away the monsters so his child could sleep at night. When I fell down, he picked me up and brushed away my tears, then taught me how to stand my ground and face my fiercest fears. He helped me pave the boulevard, and then let me find my way. The rules of life he taught me are a part of me today."

Beth Flaherty:

When I read this passage by Pamela Joyce Randolph, it immediately made me think of my father, Richard Flaherty. I've been thinking a lot lately about my relationship with my dad. He's had some health scares recently, and while he's doing okay now, I worry about how much time I have left with him. I think it's part of life that when we see our parents age, we think about our own mortality and wonder how much time we have ahead, and what impact we'll leave behind for those we love. Now that I'm an adult, I have a much greater appreciation for the subtle gifts my dad shared with me, some of which I'll share with you.

Beth Flaherty:

Family is everything, but you have to work at it. My dad's first love was baseball, and he loved using baseball analogies. I remember when I was younger and would get frustrated with my sisters, he would say, "Beth, this team we have, our little family of five, is the best team you'll ever be a part of. Sometimes it's hard to keep your eye on the ball, and sometimes the players are selfish and uncooperative, but we all know what the goal is, and the best and only way for us to get there is together."

Beth Flaherty:

I remember asking him for a trade to another team that had no bossy sisters, but he just chuckled and said, "Today it's hard to appreciate them, but when you're a grownup, you'll value their leadership skills, and you'll be glad you have them to walk through life with." No words have ever rung more true. My two sisters are my best friends, my closest confidantes, and the only ones who know what it's like to have my parents.

Beth Flaherty:

The best conversations happen in the back seat of the car. When I was a kid, my dad was always the parent who drove my sisters and our friends everywhere. I thought he volunteered because he just liked to drive, and it gave him a chance to listen to sports radio without us complaining. He told me years later that he volunteered to drive because it helped him to understand who his daughters were becoming. We never thought he was paying attention, so we talked freely about music, clothes, friends, and school, and he would get little snippets of what was going on in our lives and who those friends were. He could see which friends were good influences, and which friends might not have our best

interest at heart. Unlike my mother, who never tried to dissuade me from friendships, he would never even mention names. He would just start little conversations asking what character traits I valued most in myself and others, and why they were important to me.

Beth Flaherty:

Looking back, I see how those conversations helped me to fine-tune who I was, what mattered to me, and who I wanted to surround myself with. He told me many years later that if one of us was upset, he would try to find an excuse for a car ride, because for some reason, the car, the radio, and a little one-on-one time seemed to do wonders for us and for him. Now that I'm a parent myself, I couldn't agree more. Some of the best nuggets I've learned about my daughter Grace have come in the car.

Beth Flaherty:

You'll never regret the things that you work hard for. I was not a natural student. Everything about school was hard for me, and I had to work harder for Cs than most people work for As. My dad always told me, "Bethy, you and I are pluggers. We don't always have natural ability in certain subjects, but we work hard and plug away until we can do them. It doesn't matter how long it takes you to get there; it just matters what you learn along the way. That will make your arrival much sweeter."

Beth Flaherty:

Fight for your dreams, and your children will fight for theirs. From the time I was five, I remember my dad talking to me about college. I didn't really understand what college was, but I knew that if I wanted to go, come hell or high water, I was going. My dad's dream was to go to college, but when he was in high school, it seemed totally out of his reach financially. When I was four or five, he went back to school nights to get his associate degree, but he really wanted to earn a bachelor's in accounting. Over the years, he would mention going back to complete his degree, but there always seemed to be something that got in the way.

Beth Flaherty:

He eventually put his dreams on hold so he could focus on getting my two sisters and I through college. His proudest moments were watching the three of us cross the stage in our cap and gown and hold up our diplomas for him to see. He delighted in our accomplishments, but he still held that dream of getting his own degree. After my mother passed away in 2002, he decided his time had come, and he enrolled at UMass Boston. He started part-time, but in 2006, at the age of 62, he walked onto that graduation stage in his own cap and gown to accept his degree, with his three daughters in the audience sobbing with pride.

Beth Flaherty:

The commencement speaker was a young senator from Illinois named Barack Obama, who was a rising star in the Democratic Party. After he finished speaking, my 10-year-old nephew turned to me and said, "I can't believe that one day, I'll get to tell my grandchildren that I saw a future president of the United States speak at their great-grandfather's college graduation. That will be pretty awesome, huh?" Years from now, when my dad does pass on, I won't think of the trips we didn't take, or the big houses we didn't live in. I'll think about how that little Flaherty team of five that he loved and nurtured became the biggest blessing in my life.

Grace Killian:

Now, will you join with me in the Lord's Prayer as it's written in the back of your order of worship. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Congregation:

... who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Grace Killian:

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

Congregation:

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

Grace Killian:

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Congregation:

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Grace Killian:

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Congregation:

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Grace Killian:

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Congregation:

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Grace Killian:

Our hymn this morning is hymn number 9, Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven, found in your Princeton hymnal. Will you please stand.

Choir/Congregation:

(singing)

Grace Killian:

Now let us go in peace, in the name of Christ. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.