

# Lemon Meringue Pie: Reflections on My Dad

*Elizabeth Yank*

When I think of my dad, I think of Lemon Meringue pie. While most people like to eat it after dinner for dessert, my dad liked to eat it for breakfast. In fact, he liked any good pie for breakfast. Naturally, we kids didn't have this luxury when we were growing up. It was only later when we were visiting with our own kids that we experienced this treat.

When I think of my dad, I also think of a man who could not sit still for long. Unless, it was at the end of a very long day, when he'd sit in his chair and read the paper, he was out in the yard clearing brush, digging in the garden, or away from home playing softball, bowling, or golfing. In fact, our neighbor once took a snapshot of him leaning against the spade he often used to dig in his garden and little pond.

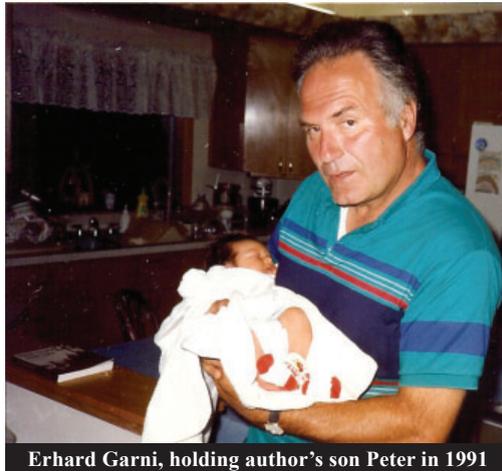
But these are not the only things that remind me of my dad. There are three qualities that defined my dad that I don't see often enough in men today. While he was not perfect by any means, he was, first of all, a man of character because he never swore. This is not to say that he didn't have plenty of opportunities to get angry.

Like many businessmen, he had to deal with unscrupulous, greedy businessmen and crabby clients. Yet he never said much about them. While driving, he too had plenty of chances to react to rude drivers cutting him off. Yet he never made obscene gestures or cursed them.

Always interested in politics and life issues, he was often frustrated with politicians for their lack of integrity, yet he never attacked their personal character. Today, it seems that people do not know how to debate. When they disagree, they simply call their opponent names, not just insulting names, but words that I could not even print. They are not

aware that their poor choice of words reflects back on them, making them look bad and not the person they are insulting. Not my dad.

I was one of nine children, which translates into lots of life with plenty of exasperating moments, like the time my brother threw a shoe or slipper at my sister and it went flying through the window, smashing glass everywhere. While my dad did get angry on occasion, he didn't call us names or put us down. Life is full of



**Erhard Garni, holding author's son Peter in 1991**

little annoyances and whopping problems that can so easily frustrate us, yet my dad chose not to address those situations with profanity. After all, what good would that do?

There is something else that made a deep impression on me at the time, which I didn't fully appreciate until later in life. He never made crude or lewd remarks about women. He didn't have any swimsuit issues or "men's" magazines or calendars or worse displayed in his workroom or office. He didn't ogle women. In fact, he never made any insulting remarks about women being inferior. On occasion, he was known to turn off the TV when it was offensive or suggestive. I naively took for granted that this was how all men treated women until one day I found out otherwise. My dad's purity of soul, on the other hand, was reflected in how he treated all women.

What I did find in his office were pictures of his children. For some reason, that surprised me. We were important enough for him to think about us in the midst of his work. We were the very reason for his work. He wasn't working for a career or to make a name for himself or to make lots of money. He was working to support his family.

There is one quality about my dad that most people probably associate with him. He was unabashedly, staunchly pro-life. He was not intimidated to be openly pro-

life. In fact, on his car license plate, he proudly proclaimed Rt2lif. He welcomed each child without saying we have to have this house first or I have to earn this much money first. He would never comment that "kids are cute but you don't want to have too many of them" because they infringe on your lifestyle, they are a burden on your checkbook, they interfere with your vacation plans, or they are just plain inconvenient. I'm sure he had to listen to plenty of insulting jokes about sex and having too many kids. He could not comprehend why anyone would choose an

abortion because babies were beautiful to him. He didn't just say this. He lived it. He supported many organizations that defended life. But more importantly, he tried to live it.

Since he only had one sister 10 years younger than himself, he thought the greatest gift you

could give a child was not a new bike or a cute puppy, but a brother or sister to love. Together my parents desired a large family even before they were married and God blessed them with nine.

Thanks dad for desiring me as a child before I was even born and for loving me to the best of your ability after I was born.

I am sure there is a piece of Lemon Meringue pie for you in heaven.

*Elizabeth Yank is a widely published Catholic writer and homeschooling mother of seven.*

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## PRECIOUS WORDS

*by Maria Ellis*

Have you ever heard a child say something concerning God or other spiritual matters that was very profound or just plain cute? Here are a few treasures uttered from the mouths of our little ones.

### **God's Goodness**

After attending Mass one day, our daughter Olivia, who was still too young to receive Holy Communion, said, "If God is so good, why aren't the Hosts made out of chocolate?"

### **Out of Order**

My daughter Teresa was four when we attended a private Mass where there was no server and thus no bells at the Consecration. When Father elevated the Host, Teresa whispered to me, "Mommy, it's not working!"

### **Ticket to Paradise**

My son Matthew, four, asked me, "How does God get us to Heaven?" He immediately answered himself, "Oh, I know! He comes down in an airplane and brings us up!"

### **Ye of Little Faith**

My four year-old daughter Samantha was drawing with her markers on her dry erase board one day. She called me to come see and very seriously said, "Mommy, I keep asking God to erase this and He won't do it! I thought God could do anything!"

"...the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Mark 10:14

To have your child's "Precious Words" printed in this article, please email [preciouswords@catholic.org](mailto:preciouswords@catholic.org) for consideration.