

Pentecost 2A (6/18/17)
Exodus 19:2-8a
Psalm 100
Romans 5:1-8
Matthew 9:35-38; 10:16-23

On Father's Day, we remember not only our fathers and father figures, but also our spiritual fathers, mentors who have helped form us through their writing, their speaking, and their faithfulness. Today, I honor one of my spiritual fathers, The Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr.

Today, we honor our fathers and father figures for the ways they have shaped and supported us, men whose strength of character is revealed in their nurturing, their steadiness, their patience and forgiveness, their willingness to open their hearts to us, and any number of other traits that define true fatherhood. But on Father's Day, we also remember our spiritual fathers, mentors who we may never have met, yet who have helped form us through their writing, their speaking, and their faithfulness. Take a moment to think of your own spiritual fathers. Who are the men to whom you return again and again for inspiration, for wisdom, and for hope when you need them the most?

Today, I honor one of my own spiritual fathers, The Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. What follows is the majority of his sermon, "A tough mind and a tender heart," based on a verse from our Gospel from Matthew today. King preached this sermon on Sunday, August 30th, 1959, in Montgomery, Alabama. His words still ring true.

"See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves." Please forgive the gender-exclusive language:

[Excerpts from "A tough mind and a tender heart," *Strength to Love*, 13-20]