

1. Blessed Twenty, Young Man! Antoine, Our Son 2002!

We couldn't be more proud of you and love you unconditionally.

We have so enjoyed securing your first apartment, as it is our call as Parental Units to provide with love and means for your safe launch by the grace of The Father and His Mother!

Continue to develop your faith, character, compassionate nature, love of the less fortunate, kind ways of tongue for speaking and action for good. You have the bloodline from three sides, Spanish Basque, French Basque and German! The Trinitarian three have planted your sense of humor, tenacity and grit to get the job done to the best of your ability, humility, being and doing good because it is the right thing to do. (Not to mention your tall good looks!) Always choose the high road praying for God's grace and guidance for His will to be your will every day that you wake.

We acquired and furnished your Churchhill location in order for you to think, study, some recreation (!), rest, envision and plan your days hence life, wisely. You have shown us that you can be selective with your invitees for the old adage is true, "show me who you run with and I'll tell you what you are!" Your friends influence your choices in becoming a better person. Seek wise counsel. A well ordered space is in good form for an ordered and active mind. So live and enjoy your second home in this your twentieth year and work to make this world a more hospitable and loving place. You are on the right track.

I was reading a "German Proverbs" book Aunt Constance purchased while in Texas Hill Country recently and wanted to share some of our favorites...food for thought while in your new Nituzi!

- + A poor person isn't he who has little, but he who needs a lot.
- + Be silent, or say something better than silence.
- + Not every ass has long ears!
- + Happy is the one who forgets what cannot be changed.
- + A penny's worth of cheerfulness can dispel a pound of problems.
- + Instead of complaining that the rosebud is full of thorns, be happy that the thorn bush has roses!
- + He who wants to warn himself in old age must build a fireplace in his youth.
- + God blesses the seeking rather than the finding.
- + God gives, but man must open his hand!

You're launched at twenty...you have a fully inspected boat, a global map, experience in tacking and with The Father's Light your course will be made known to you later when you become a sojourner on your very own journey of life. This world can be a beautiful place. We know, and believe in you!

Lead, Kindly Light! We love you more than life itself! Mama and Dad

2. Dear Son,

July 2003

Age Twenty-one! An adult in the eyes of the world and an outstanding and 'lovin lovin' son in the eyes of your parents!

You are a man and have the good heart, developing mind and beautiful soul interfaced with your adult status. Decisions are now yours along with the inherent responsibility of those

decisions. It's simple, you are what you treasure in your heart and you are the company you keep! You've done very well in both of these areas.

You are a joy to us and we are so very proud of you and your accomplishments. We love you and will always be here for you; we will support you in every way and will always be in your corner!

We miss you down here (!) but know that you are happy and have made a life for yourself in Monroe and that makes us happy. Our many waking thoughts are of you but we try to give you all the space you need to flourish and grow in the palm of The Father's hand where we placed you when you drove away for college! He knows your hearts desire and aspirations. In that you are close to Maw Maw, continue to pray to her and Sts. Anthony and Joseph as they have guided you and kept you safe from harm, not to mention your Guardian Angels!

- + Live wholeheartedly, be surprised and awed by all good things, give thanks and praise – then you will discover the fullness of your life.**
- + Sometimes you have to take the leap and build your wings on the way down!**
- + Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you have not: remember that what you now have was once among the things only hoped for.**
- + The soul like the body lives on what it feeds on.**
- + Learn from everything you do. There is no bad experience.**
- + One can accomplish great success if he doesn't care who gets the credit.**
- + When the well's dry we know the worth of water.**
- + To pour benefits to the common good is divine.**

Lead, Kindly Light and God Blesses...All our love,

Dad and Mama

3. 14 December 2003

My Dear Son, Antoine ~

One of your dreams becomes reality tomorrow with hospital orientation at The Medical Center. Congratulations! We are so very happy for you and wish we were there to iron your scrubs, polish your tennis shoes, fix breakfast and send you off, but then, we did that when you drove off in your first car with a pager on your belt! You haven't come home since!!! You remind me of me, as I couldn't wait to get out into the world and experience, learn, meet and greet and test my wings! I 'm still doing just that! We are so proud of you, Son!

Remember everyday/post this on your mirror - People are in the hospital because they don't feel well or may be dying & will hear of that diagnosis during your shift. Many are there fearful, alone, wanting, angry in that they have lost control of their life, environment and dignity. Always always remember, they are the reason you serve, they are the distressing disguise of The Father and His Mother, everyone, the

wonderful sweet ones and the challenging ones, especially the challenging ones; they are the most afraid. You will see them in heaven one day and they will have remembered your kindness. (Remember to sing IN HIS TIME to them and watch them change!) ICU Cardiology and ICU Pediatrics are special, special places indeed!

Education is never wasted, so hold the line, keep the faith, be good and your dreams will come to fruition. We stand behind you 2,000 per cent. You are our star, bright, so competent, smart, engaging, kind, suave/kool (!), compassionate, time managed (!), humorous, guapo and confident!! You have been given every advantage that we could muster and you have soared! You know how to bite the bullet as PawPaw would say and make it happen. Keep up the good work, apply yourself everyday, never get overwhelmed by negative talk or feelings- remember the first report is never accurate (!), take one day at a time and for God's sake, say your prayers and ask the Blessed Mother for all that you need.

Lead, Kindly Light!
Your lovin lovin MAMA and DAD!

PS Find the gym at the Medical Center and gently work out after your shift. It will do wonders for your system! You may also meet a P.T. there and ask away!
Baby steps... Good luck and God blesses!

4. 1 June 2005

Dear Son:

We are so happy you are happy meeting new people, experiencing a new place and doing a wonderful service to humankind...teaching the children! We are so proud of you – keep up the good work!

Enclosed is the stuff; wanted to send cookies but thought that you cannot have them in your cabin?!? Will send on to you Abuela's cosas when they arrive...can you have stuff/cookies?! She wants to hear a report on you every Sunday night and Daddy's delightfully shares your exploits with her which she revels in. Hope you enjoy Miss Renee's cards for you as they should come in handy as you network the East Coast!! We'll be making 'Translations' business cards for Daddy soon!!!

Daddy cut the article for you and we agreed that you have the bases covered very well in that area!! What a shame such a thing is needed; where are their Mama's?!?! You have such an advantage in life with all your experiences and options to travel and experience other cultures, ways of life that you took advantage of as well as institutes and training in different disciplines to include spirituality. Press on and upward to your goals as they come one step, one day at a time. The Father has a plan for you and HE is always with you, as we. Say your night prayers, find a church, be nice and keep your nose clean!!!

Lead, Kindly Light!
Daddy and Mama

5. Son, a Catholic education of 12 years and upbringing paid off early in your young adult life. Your college friend Jenni asked you to be her sponsor for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.) program in your church parish of Jesus the Good Shepherd. You readily agreed and called me with the wonderful news. We were thrilled and so very grateful to The Father and His Mother! At the time that Jenni was to select a Saint's name as her Confirmation name, you told her that this was one of my favorite subjects! I replied in email to you for Jenni...

14 February 2005

A saint for Jenni...Could-it-be St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. Jane de Chantal or St. Catherine Laboure. She can go online and read about them, select and then any of their books can be ordered online. The first two were married women...St. Jane said, "Nothing so impedes perfection in a vocation as wishing for another!" St. Catherine was a nun who is our divine conduit for the Miraculous Medal which Mama wears attached to her undergarment with a safety pin! I gave it to Aunt Constance to wear on her trip throughout France which is the mother country of St. Catherine. Presently, a grandmother-friend is wearing it as her grandsons (2) are serving in Iraq. She is to return the medal to me when her prayers are answered one way or the other as she prays for the trust, strength and grace to accept the Father's will.

As Jenni reads she can prayerfully ask the Blessed Mother to move her as to the Saint she is to request to especially companion her throughout her life. She will know.

Love you...Lead, Kindly Light!
MAMA

(P.S. Antoine now has two Goddaughters, Jenni and Amanda!)

6. Dear Antoine,

Happy Feast Day...St. Anthony of Padua

A very popular and compassionate saint it says he was...not unlike you. I'm sure that you are enjoying all of the counselors and campers and they are enjoying you.

How appropriate for your Feast Day that Matthew's reading for today parallels this similar thought....

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lamp stand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."

I know that you have little time for reading these days, but I hope this short story helps you today with your task of inspiring and leading.

"When I was a child, my family used to go camping at a nearby state park. In the middle of the park was a huge water tank. In an attempt to help it blend in with the natural setting, they built up dirt around it, nearly to the top, so that only the top of the tank could be seen. This construction created an imposing central hill with a flat metal surface at the top.

One evening, just as it was turning dark, my brother and I asked my parents if we could go up and play on the top of the water tank. “Why?” my mother asked. “Because, it’s fun. We run around with all of the other kids and play tag and catch lightning bugs.” She looked over at the hill, which stood in dark silence. “What other kids?” she asked.

Finally she agreed, and we grabbed our flashlights and ran to the hill. We climbed the dark, quiet path to the top. Out of breath, we sat on the top and looked down. We could see the campfires and the lanterns dotted out from all directions. We shined our flashlights around, seeing how far the beams traveled, and trying to spot a skunk or a rabbit.

Then it started. First one flashlight, then another, then a few more. Soon, dozens of flashlights bobbed as they moved in the direction of the hill. From every direction, lights ascended the hill, until the entire top of the hill was filled with flashlight-bearing boys and girls running around, playing tag, and catching lightning bugs.”

Today’s Gospel passage is normally used to inspire us to share our talents, to “let our lights shine.” This, of course, is necessary and good. But what about those situations where we know others with talents that have not yet been called into service?

Saint Anthony of Padua, honored today, lived in a dark place – a cave – and only left it to attend daily Mass and sweep the floors at a nearby monastery. As legend goes, when the scheduled speaker failed to appear, the monks invited Anthony to speak. They were so enamored with his insights, that he was immediately pressed into service to travel, speak, and teach theology. It was said that even the fish loved to listen to him speak.

Saint Anthony of Padua remained silent as he swept the monastery each day. The monks – and the Lord – knew that Anthony’s insights were better than his silence.

Do we know people who do not think they have anything to share? Maybe it’s our calling to carry our own flashlights up there. Maybe it’s our calling to invite others to bring theirs. Either way, my guess is that the hill will be a little brighter – maybe a lot brighter.”

Could it be today, Antoine that only in your special way, you use your gift of leadership and inspiration to invite those in your care to uncover the light that is already in them as children of God

I hope you are having a great time and pray that your heart is at peace.
Miss and love you,

Ms. Renee
June 13, 2006

7. June 15, 2006

Happy Father’s Day,

Yes, Antoine, I'm sending this to the correct person. I know that fatherhood is very far from your mind, but in thinking about this day that we celebrate fathers, I couldn't help but think of you-- one day in the future.

In whatever way and time that the Father has planned for you to be a father: a child of your own or one that is sent to you in a special way, you have it in you to be a great Dad. All of the wonderful qualities that define fatherhood are in you. You have been the beneficiary of a wonderful caring father and these traits are in you. I have witnessed them...your caretaking inclinations, your skills for tender guidance, and your natural affinity for teaching. So, although you are not a father now, I assume your role as caretaker for your campers requires you to call upon some fatherly duties and you have as example those traits from your own loving father.

Happy (Father's) Day to you and Your Dad

Love you,

Ms. Renee

8. Dear Antoine,

Enclosed is an article on Saint Brendan and his search at sea for the Holy Isle of God. The article describes a sailor who never left port without taking St. Brendan's prayer and Spirit with him. I thought you may enjoy reading it and using the story in your devotional time with your campers. I also included the article of who St. Brendan was and the prayer for the Spirit of Saint Brendan.

Your mom and I love the daily 'Quite Moments in Catholic Digest'. I thought some of these may be words of inspiration during your devotional time as well.

I so enjoyed talking with you the other day and hearing about your activities. You didn't answer my question about what color dress shorts you had on, though! The seersucker colors are beginning to reach Louisiana, so you will be in style down here also.

Keep up the hard work and know that all of your actions are being emulated and will be taken home to all corners of the world when these young boys leave you. Put the true Antoine forward for all to see.

Love you,

9. Ms. Renee

July 27, 2006

St. Brendan is a Celtic saint who was born in what is now County Kerry, Ireland, about 486 A.D., approximately 25 years after the death of St. Patrick. He was taken from his family at a very young age and raised by St. Aida of Killeedy under the patronage of Bishop Erc of Kerry. He became a monk, then a priest and finally an abbot. He had a very strong influence on the Celtic church, which at the time was poorly organized, and is regarded as one of Ireland's most important saints. He was responsible for founding a number of abbey's and monasteries, including the one at Clonfert in Galway, where he died about 578 A.D.

He is known as Brendan the "Voyager" or the "Navigator" because of the many voyages he made around the British Isles and to the coast of Brittany. Even skeptics concede that he visited the Holy Isle of Iona on the west coast of Scotland where he met with St. Columba. However, the voyage for which Brendan is best known is shrouded in the midst of legend. This is the story of his search for the Land of Promise, far away in the west..

It seems that Brendan was visited by another Irish monk who told him about this land far across the ocean. Thoroughly intrigued, Brendan decided to see for himself. He built a special boat out of oak- bark tanned ox hides stretched over a framework of ash, provisioned it for a voyage of 40 days, and set off with 17 other monks. He took along some extra ox hides and grease to dress them in case repairs were needed during the voyage.

Almost immediately they encountered bad weather, stormy seas and high winds. After 15 days they were blown onto an island where they were met by a dog who led them to a settlement. There a meal was prepared and waiting for them. They stayed three days, seeing no one but always finding food prepared for them.

Their next landfall was the Island of Sheep, where in addition to large flocks of sheep there were streams full of trout and the sea-weary monks could rest for a while. By contrast, the next island they came to was devoid of all vegetation, - completely bare. They pulled their boat up and began making camp, including building a fire. To their amazement the island began to move, gently at first but then more strongly. The terrified monks raced back to their boat and pushed off just in time to see the "island" swim away with their fire still burning on its back. They had made camp on Jaconious, the biggest whale of all.

They were probably a lot more careful before building a fire on the Paradise of Birds, which was their next stop. On this island there were birds of every type and sort. They all joined the monks at their prayers, and one little bird sat on Brendan's shoulder and told him that the voyage would last not 40 days but 7 years.

For the next three months they made another landfall and were exhausted when they finally reached an island inhabited by an order of monks. This order lived under a rule of silence, but the abbot broke the rule long enough to tell Brendan that they had lived there for 80 years. In all that time they had experienced no illness or mishaps of any kind. One of the monks with Brendan was so impressed by this order that he asked and received permission to remain with them.

He was not with Brendan and the others when they reached the very edge of Hell itself. Giant demons threw great lumps of burning slag at them from huge fiery furnaces, and they could see rivers of gold fire running down from the furnaces. Another of the monks fell overboard during the bombardment and was lost forever.

Their adventures continued as they were chased by a bad whale, saved by a good whale, and buffeted by storms and high winds. Sometimes, though, it would be calm, - so calm that they could look down through the water and see fish lying in a circle, head to tail. Once, when Brendan sang, the fish circled the boat to listen to him.

Another time they saw a tall crystal pillar in the sea, so high that they could not see the top of it and covered with a wide-meshed net. In it was an opening big enough for the boat so they sailed through it. As they did so, they could see that the pillar extended even further into the sea than it towered above. It took them three days to sail through and around it.

Finally after sailing through dense fog they reached their destination. They were met by a young man who acted as their guide. They explored the fringe of this Promised Land but were prevented from going further by a great river, too large for them to cross.

They returned to Ireland by much the same route, though probably avoiding Hell. They even encountered Jasconius the whale once again, and this time he helped by towing the boat from the Paradise of Birds to the Island of Sheep. Shortly after their return, Brendan died.

This story was very popular in the Middle Ages, and so many versions of it exist that it took one American scholar, Carl Selmer, nearly 30 years to trace them. In 1959 he published a comprehensive Latin version of NAVIGATIO SANTI BRENDANI ABBATIS - The Voyage of St. Brendan the Abbot. For many years it was dismissed as pure fabrication with no possibility of being true. Various destinations were suggested for Brendan if he in fact ever made a voyage at all. These were all close to the British Isles, although some did think he might have reached the Canary Islands.

However, in the 1970s Tim Severin became fascinated with the Brendan story. He studied maps and charts and did extensive research before coming up with his Stepping-Stone Route. He maintained that, by using prevailing winds and currents, it would be possible for a small boat to travel from Ireland to North America. He also maintained that the only way to prove it was to do it.

He had a boat built out of a framework of ash and covered with oxhides. Experimentation proved that oak bark does make the most seaworthy tanning solution for these hides. He named the boat the BRENDAN (of course) and, with some like-minded friends, he too set sail from Galway. As they traveled he realized that many of the landmarks and other events mentioned in the NAVIGATIO make a lot of sense to someone in a very small boat. The coast of Iceland, with its many active volcanoes, might well have seemed like the edge of Hell, and an ice-berg looks exactly like a crystal column. The story of this voyage is told in Tim Severin's book, THE BRENDAN VOYAGE. It did not take them 40 days, but it didn't take 7 years either. They did leave their boat in port over winter and finished the voyage the following year. But on June 26th, 1977, after sailing through dense fog for several days, they reached the coast of Newfoundland!

Prayer for the Spirit of Saint Brendan

God of sea and land, you endowed your servant Brendan with a bold and adventurous spirit, to occupy himself for your business on the great waters, and revealed to him your wonders in the deep. Make us, who recall with thanksgiving his life and ministry, zealous to be pioneers and pilgrims for the faith of Christ. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

10. A) I recently came across 2 letters written to Antoine to be read by him during his high school senior year retreat in February 2000!

Dear Antoine,

February 18, 2000

Once there was a little boy who was born to adoring parents. They could not wait to have their family meet him. The family all gathered at the airport, anxiously waiting the arrival of the plane that carried him and his parents.

When the plane touched down, the family let out a shout, especially the godmother, who was pacing back and forth in front of the windows.

Finally, he was in sight, carried by his mother. The family rushed the door, but the godmother beat them all. She scooped the baby in her arms and covered him with kisses. He looked confused, drooling a little. Then he gave the most beautiful smile to everyone. He knew he was surrounded by so many who loved him. His parents' smiles and tears shouted pure joy.

Now he is on his senior retreat in high school, the years flying in the wake of his rush to adulthood. With him, he brings the knowledge that he will soon be embarking on roads and skyways, taking turns and making choices.

His godmother knows that he will enjoy and learn from the journey, his family will always be there, in person, in spirit, on e-mail, in snailmail, on video, in thought, in prayer. Those who look down from the heavens will protect him and whisper in his ear when the paths to choose aren't well marked.

He will bring new and old friends home, to be warmed by the same fire he felt, knowing the fire will always be lit. His prior education and experiences, good and not so good, will be called upon, to be added to like lovely garland on a Christmas tree, tucked in and draped to complete the total picture.

He will take care of his body, a temple of the Holy Spirit, listening well to what it says and acting accordingly. He will have infinite empathy for those seeking a level of health suitable to themselves.

He will practice his faith, and investigate others, to know what he has been given, and live it out. It will shine like a beacon for the fellow sailors who seem to not be able to locate the shore.

He will go forth, knowing his godmother wishes for him faith and hope and love, but the greatest wish that has already been granted by this godmother is love.

With gratitude,
Your godmother...Aunt Constance

10. B-) Dear Antoine

We were asked if we would write a "caritas" a Greek word meaning "love letter" to you on your retreat. Writing a love letter expressing my affection, love and concern for you is as easy as looking around both my home and office...everywhere I look there you are. But, it is certainly about more than things that remind me of you. I have so many wonderful memories as well.

I remember the first day I met you...April 6, 1989 at Sylvan...how's that for a memory for this 41 year old? Actually, I remember it well because it was Debby's 40th birthday, and I had filled her office with balloons. I thought that it was pretty cool looking, but when you came in and I saw it through the eyes of a 6 year old...then it was really Cool! When I sat down to talk with your mother about the things I wanted to work with you on...she said in only the way that your mother could, "Well, I guess it is going to take the three of us to raise this child." I wasn't sure what she meant at the time, but later I was to find out. That was how I was invited into your life.

You have been pure joy and gift ever since...from going to the circus, riding elephants, Disney World, weekly discussions on life when we were supposed to be doing homework, Renaissance Festivals...too many Louisiana festivals to name, convertible rides around Dallas, Dave & Busters, Water World, Snow Villages, seemingly endless car shopping trips, college tours...

I certainly have been blessed with wonderful memories. Now as you begin to take your next step into the 'world', I look forward to the many more shared times which we will have.

As you continue your retreat know that there are many people praying for you. I think we all pray that God will continue to bless you with your wonderful sense of humor, your compassion for people and your zest for life. We also pray that you know that through every difficult decision you are guided by God, and that you are loved by Him as well as all of us.

Thank you for a lifetime of shared memories. Know that no matter how far you travel, you are never far from your Ms. Renee.

I love you.
February 14, 2000

11. Recently Antoine sent a Forward from the internet and the Subject: FW: "Why Go To Church" certainly caught my eye. I think it will mean something for you also!

This guy put in a great perspective.
Why go to Church? (This is good)

If you're spiritually alive, you're going to love this! If you're spiritually dead, you won't want to read it. If you're spiritually curious, there is still hope!

"Why Go To Church?"

A Church goer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday. "I've gone for 30 years now," he wrote, "and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons. But for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time and the pastors are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all."

This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column, much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher:

"I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this. They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!" When you are DOWN to nothing.... God is UP to something! Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible and receives the impossible! Thank God for our physical AND our spiritual nourishment!

All right, now that you're done reading, send it on! I think everyone should read this! "When Satan is knocking at your door, simply say, "Jesus, could you get that for me?"

"Just going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in your garage makes you a car."

Dearest Son!

WOW! Wonderful way of looking at it especially when one is living it in such irreligious societies! You have good friends that get it! They are fortunate to have you as a friend that lives it.

Love! Lead, Kindly Light and HE DOES!
MAMA and DAD

12. Antoine, April 2007...

Wow...what a writer! I am so proud of you for venturing out into these exciting waters!

What an exciting time ahead for you. I can't wait to hear all about what this will entail for you and what you will have the opportunity to learn. Isn't it fascinating where the Father will place us in His time and His place when we just trust. I love all of your sailing jargon!!

Congratulations...also on your Coast Guard Merchant Marine License.

Sail on,

Love ya,

Ms. Renee

13. July 2007

Dearest Son,

We have been thinking about you this entire day, your blessed 25th birthday! 25 years ago at 7:30 a.m. this morning you were with us and I was nursing!!!

I was updating your link on www.leadkindlylight.net this morning and reading such good memories...as you would say "...it says it all!" For your Dad's 'Sayings' click Remembrances and scroll to the end...they are so witty and true!!

So sorry about your birthday package but you can look forward to tomorrow and both of you will be opening gifts on the same day!! His gifts - I pressure-washed all the concrete on Spring Street to include the front planter and it looks like a new brick home!! The other part of his birthday gift is that he is going to Puerto Rico in August and while he is away, Miss Renee is going to paint the Master Bedroom and take the closet doors down painting

all the trim, same colors and, I will be German trimming the horseshoe hedge with a commercially rented trimmer!! Also, I'll have his vehicle detailed and a new pair of windshield wipers! Now, that is a birthday with services as presents!!! This is what happens at 71 years of age!!!

Some thoughts from Mama upon achieving full time employment and staying in one place most of the time!! Could-it-be...

- 1) Tithes by monthly envelope in your church parish. The Father will not be outdone in your generosity. This I have experienced for many years now.
- 2) Read the bulletin and see where you can serve in the parish...youth program, Eucharistic Minister...RCIA is too much for now as well as the Knights of Columbus and the Diaconate ... for later! 'The Hibernia' for the Catholic Singles gathering?!?!
- 3) Put some money aside monthly for travel, Christmas fund, lifelong learning courses and the less-fortunate...remember the ziploc bags?!?
- 4) Shop *Goodwill*...you can't believe what they have come through!!! See #3 for list!
- 5) Request of Ken the name of a Certified Financial Planner (in addition to your Dad) that he would recommend for you to soon meet with and see what options are for now and for securing your financial future! Every paycheck will count toward your Retirement/Re-irement (and Long-Term Care (!)) and they should begin working for you monthly as you are working period; every penny counts! PawPaw said, "take care of the pennies, the dollars will take care of themselves!" The future is always an unknown. Only The Father knows and you must check in with Him daily for your marching orders. Eternal life is where you are headed; The Father keeps the best books of how you serve others in love, compassion, kindness and completeness! You were raised to do this well.

Continue to have a beautiful day and know we love you more than life itself.

This is what happens when I am not with you on your birthday and this may have to be the last time. I don't like this!!!

Enjoy tomorrow and all the tomorrows of your life as The Father created just you to serve Him on the rows in the vineyard that he has selected for just you. (I thanked the Benedictine sisters in Arkansas on your first day at YSU that prayed you into a safe residence and employment in His time. They are so happy for you and continue their daily prayers for Los Pontóns!)

Lead, Kindly Light!
MAMA and DAD

14. We received an Anniversary card from Antoine as we were celebrating our 30th on January 14, 2008! These occasion cards are part of a pack ready for he to send to others...

"Marriage is an exciting adventure for those in love. Your wedding day is a past event, and in its reflection you are able to see the richness and fullness that time and maturity bring. In marriage God gives us one miracle after another. Hopes blend together in a harmony of purpose and expression which defies the logic of the mathematician, for one plus one equals one as well as two.

Today's special moments form the framework of the love of many tomorrows. As your love grows, the bond you have nurtured with your caring becomes more precious. God will continue to guide you as you walk side by side, and the living Christ will provide the light to enrich your walk with Him. Blessed Anniversary!"

And in his hand wrote, "So I believe your card says it best mom and dad...the maturity that you two bring to the table is worth its weight in gold! Good things come to those who wait and wait you did... & look at how the good Lord has blessed us. I love you more than you'll ever know and thank God every day for how lucky I am to have the 'Best' parents around. Love Always!"

Well, with laughter and full hearts for him, we are the grateful ones!

15. Dearest Son,

9 August 2008

MAMA just finished reading a book entitled *Mission: Success!* by Og Mandino who is the most widely read inspirational and self-help author in the world today! I read with you in mind as I once read books of this nature when I was your age and in the working world!! It was wonderful to read thinking of you and your God-given gifts and natural abilities!

Below are the nuggets ... I am sending you the book soon. Read below slowly and often and those that hit you, internalize much. These nuggets ring some truth.

I love you, believe in you and pray you all good things daily!

LKL, MAMA and Dad

PS Who is the Patron Saint of computers?!?! I will ask

1. God, thank you for this day. I know I have not accomplished as yet all you expect of me and if that is your reason for bathing me in the fresh dew of another dawn, I am most grateful.
2. I am prepared, at last, to make you proud of me.
3. I will forget yesterday, with all its trials and tribulations, aggravations and setbacks, angers and frustrations. The past is already a dream from which I can neither retrieve a single word nor erase any foolish deeds.
4. I will resolve, however, that if I have injured anyone yesterday through my thoughtlessness, I will not let this day's sun set before I make amends, and nothing I do today will be of greater importance.
5. I will not fret the future. My success and happiness does not depend on straining to see what lurks dimly on the horizon but to do, this day, what lies clearly at hand.
6. I will treasure this day, for it is all I have. I know that its rushing hours cannot be accumulated or stored, like precious grain, for future use.

7. I will live as all good actors do when they are onstage-only in the moment. I cannot perform at my best today by regretting my previous act's mistakes or worrying about the scene to come.
8. I will embrace today's difficult tasks, take off my coat, and make dust in the world. I will remember that the busier I am, the less harm I am apt to suffer, the tastier will be my food, the sweeter my sleep, and the better satisfied I will be with my place in the world.
9. I will free myself today from slavery to the clock and calendar. Although I will plan this day in order to conserve my steps and energy, I will begin to measure my life in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not seasons; in feelings, not figures on a dial.
10. I will remain aware of how little it takes to make this a happy day. Never will I pursue happiness, because it is not a goal, just a by-product, and there is no happiness in having or in getting, only in giving.
11. I will run from no danger I might encounter today, because I am certain that nothing will happen to me that I am not equipped to handle with your help. Just as any gem is polished by friction, I am certain to become more valuable through this day's adversities, and if you close one door, you always open another for me.
12. I will live this day as if it were Christmas. I will be a give of gifts and deliver to my enemies the gift of forgiveness; my opponents, tolerance; my friends, a smile; my children, a good example, and every gift will be wrapped with unconditional love.
13. I will waste not even a precious second today in anger or hate or jealousy or selfishness. I know that the seeds I sow will harvest, because every action, good or bad, is always followed by an equal reaction. I will plant only good seeds this day.
14. I will treat today as a priceless violin. One may draw harmony from it and another, discord, yet no one will blame the instrument. Life is the same, and if I play it correctly, it will give forth beauty, but if I play it ignorantly, it will produce ugliness.
15. I will condition myself to look on every problem I encounter today as no more than a pebble in my shoe. I remember the pain, so harsh I could hardly walk, and recall my surprise when I removed my shoe and found only a grain of sand.

16. I will work convinced that nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. To do anything today that is truly worth doing, I must not stand back shivering and thinking of the cold and danger, but jump in with gusto and scramble through as well as I can.
17. I will face the world with goals set for this day, but they will be attainable ones, not the vague, impossible variety declared by those who make a career of failure. I realize that you always try me with a little, first, to see what I would do with a lot.
18. I will never hide my talents. If I am silent, I am forgotten, if I do not advance, I will fall back. If I walk away from any challenge today, my self-esteem will be forever scarred, and if I cease to grow, even a little, I will become smaller. I reject the stationary position because it is always the beginning of the end.
19. I will keep a smile on my face and in my heart even when it hurts today. I know that the work is a looking glass and gives back to me the reflection of my own soul. Now I understand the secret of correcting the attitude of others and that is to correct my own.
20. I will turn away from temptation today that might cause me to break my word or lose my self-respect. I am positive that the only thing I possess more valuable than my life is my honor.
21. I will work this day with all my strength, content in the knowledge that life does not consist of wallowing in the past or peering anxiously at the future. It is appalling to contemplate the great number of painful steps by which one arrives at a truth so old, so obvious, and so frequently expressed. Whatever it offers, little or much, my life is now.
22. I will pause whenever I am feeling sorry for myself today, and remember that this is the only day I have and I must play it to the fullest. What my part may signify in the great whole, I may not recognize, but I am here to play it and now is the time.
23. I will remember that those who have fewest regrets are those who take each moment as it comes for all its worth.
24. This is my day. These are my seeds. Thank you, God, for this precious garden of time.

This is the wonderful reply from AAP...

“Wow, I got this while sitting in church...coincidence?!?”

(I was thinking... I appreciate technology but in church?!?! O Well!! He got it!!)

16. July 2009

Dearest Son,

Thank you for all the arranging that went into our visit to Raleigh, Ashville and Brevard, NC in celebration of your 27th and Dada's 73rd birthdays!

Your friends were delightful to meet and spend some time with! As always they were warm, courteous and kind toward us as they graciously allowed us to speak of you throughout the evening!!! You are a true friend therefore you have good and decent friends. That was a great start to our holiday!

Your home is inviting and very kool! I know the right rug will lie down right in front of you when it is ready to be found!! Very handsome and classy place indeed; you have a great eye for placement and you have the treasures to place! I love it all! So SORRY I forget to finish your Meals on Wheels binder...I can't believe it...I put it on the floor to the left of your MBRoom bookcase to finish later and there it stayed!

The Biltmore complex was over the top and fascinating to behold! I am so pleased The Big V's were happily married and abundantly shared with their employees and friends. I loved walking with you in hand in hand; you gave me your granola bar within those walls of luxury!!! Thank you!

(I will think of an audio player in the future for recording an 'Arthur Avenue Heritage Tour!!!')

Enjoy the pic of your parents ~ wired!!!

I loved attending Mass with you and hearing you sing. Now I know how much MawMaw loved hearing her children sing in church!!! It's a Mom thing!

Your vehicle is like flying a Lear, is safe feeling...just a magnificent machine. And, it is blessed!

Thank you for our vettles from the store which fed us totally and well. Our 'diving' movie was on last night but I couldn't watch it without you!

We love you more than life itself and loved and cherish our time with you. We miss you already.

Lead, Kindly Light!

MAMA

17. Son! While rummaging through paper I came across a letter written to PawPaw and MawMaw from Manolo in Puerto Rico, 6 November 1978 translated by your father who was age 42!! I was 30! Everybody was happy!!

Distinquished Monlezun Family:

A few days ago we received the letter, in which you express elation at Bernadette's selection of our son as her husband and companion.

When she visited us, Bernadette won immediately the love of the entire family with her humbleness and friendly, loving nature towards us.

Likewise, we are pleased that our son selected your daughter as his wife and companion for the rest of his life.

It may be that some day our family and yours can meet to celebrate such a happy development.

Greetings from all; may God help you and give you their grandchildren soon.

Please excuse the late response.

We say goodbye with love to you."

Manolo y Carmen

18. 7 February 2010 Raleigh, NC

Father! Bless this new home that safely embraces our dear son Antoine.

Thank you for its roof and walls that will shelter him, its portals blessing everyone whose feet trod within, who enter and bless them as they leave going out into the world. Thank you for a protected place for his vehicle, a fireplace that will keep him warm and illuminating your love and wisdom for him, food stored for his body and good reading and technology for his mind, and plenty of light that will remind him that You are *The Light* for his world.

May Antoine's home continue to be a safe haven for those who are troubled, sorrow-filled, feeling lost and forgotten that he may bring your love and compassion, Father, to those who find their way to him. Let him be your hands, your voice, your heart and ears for careful listening and tough love. Give others the ability to be grateful for that which they have experienced in your servant, Antoine and the desire to pray it forward.

Thank you for our Hectór who is always there for our son in every way; it will always be so for he truly loves him more than life itself. Thank you for Ms. Renee, our faithful friend, who is our true treasure who holds our hearts of gratefulness!

Thank you for Antoine's health so that he may labor toward his goals in life. Continue to give him the desire to know Your will and way for him in this life so that he will be perfected to dwell with You in the next.

Thank you for his faithfulness in the practice of his Roman Catholic faith especially in this world of strife and false teachings which surround him on every side. Give him Your guidance as You abide in him for You are the way to eternal life. Amen!

Bless this house, O Lord we pray
 Make it safe by night and day.
 Bless these walls so firm and stout
 Keeping want and trouble out.
 Bless the roof and beams so tall
 Let thy peace lie over all.
 Bless us all that we may be
 Ever open to joy and love.

Bless these windows shining bright
 Letting in God's heavenly light.
 Bless our son who dwells within
 Keep him pure and free from sin.
 Bless us all that we may be fit O Lord to dwell with thee.
 Bless us all that one day we may dwell O Lord with thee.

LOVE, MAMA

19. Dearest Son,

Blessed Happy Birthday in the 28th year of your wonderful life! You are our heart!

This week you are somewhere in the British Virgin Islands on vacation with eleven friends! You are the Captain of the boat and we pray you are all having an exciting adventure and will soon have the electronic capability to call home as soon as communications allow!!!! Our trust rests in The Father and your ability and skill to your tasks at hand. We pray you good wind to fill the sails and calm seas! And may your thoughts be one of gratefulness to The Father and our Blessed Mother for all of your gifts and talents which are making a difference in this world. We, and your grandparents on both sides, are so very proud of you while we are loving you all the way to heaven!!

Mama returned last evening from Holy Angels Convent in Jonesboro, Arkansas having been on retreat with Benedictine Oblates and the Dear Sisters! You are on the Prayer Board in a prominent spot and they pray for your intentions on your heart four times; they are powerful prayer warriors!

We are so very proud of you and love you more than life itself. You have developed into quite the young man, smooth, knowledgeable, balanced, healthy, witty/very witty, compassionate, faith-filled and caring leader! What more could parents want? I know, to live closer to you and enjoy seeing you in action as Daddy would say! We do when we visit as we love doing and will do many more times in the future. We certainly loved having you home for Father's Day!!

Remain in His will and way, pray unceasing for His inspiration and guidance in your life; know you are our pearl beyond price and that we love you more than life itself!

Lead, Kindly Light!...to safe harbor!!!
Daddy and Mama

20. As you were preparing to depart for Australia...27 October 2009

The votive was lit this morning as you prepare in everyway for your wonderful and exciting trip in the southern most part of this beautiful world!!

MAMA thoughts...

- Set your mind to enjoy all aspects of this trip knowing that enduring some aspects are inevitable! All is experience, can and will be used at some time in your wonderful life!
- Keep your head on a swivel! Don't talk to strangers!! Australia is the last frontier!!!
- Find aboriginal art (Museum?!) and enjoy! I simply love it!!
- Keep wallet/passport/papers very close to you; the best of the bad are out there always looking for prime targets and *they never sleep!*
- Pray to center yourself when extra tired or overwhelmed/ hold on to your Seelos medal and rest will cover you like the mantel of the Blessed Mother!
- Smile, always be kind and considerate putting others first knowing compassion is one of the greatest virtues!
- The Father and we love you so very much...see and know that this world was created in love for us and is a marvel to behold every day in every way. Nature is simply spectacular!
- We will think of you every moment knowing you are enjoying at age 27, an unprecedented experience of a lifetime!

Our love to Ashton and Gordy/ditto above!!!!

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT!! LOVE you more than LIFE itself...

Dad and Mama

21. Dearest Son on Your Twenty-ninth Birthday!!

The passing of the first exam in the field of insurance should make you very proud and that pleases us very much! And, it is your birthday so it is an extra gift that your state exam is tomorrow and that today, Monday, you are studying! The Father has great things in store for you in serving others and each day of your life is a preparation for that service offered through your thoughts, intentions, heart, soul and life of good example by doing the right thing!

We know these have been times of searching but as PawPaw would say, "What else would you be doing in your young life, for what are a few years in finding your part of the vineyard and spending the rest of your life using all that good experience and means to help others as well as yourself?" We concur so enjoy the journey!!

Your father and I love you more than life itself as our days are filled with thoughts of you and our smiles show our contentment with you who are growing into all you can be in His image and likeness. You are compassionate, good-to-the-bone, smart, empathetic, humorous, thoughtful, kind, loving, caring, honorable, faith-filled, dependable, generous, time-managed, punctual, inquisitive, astute judge of character, honest, my handsome, fun-loving, capable, trustworthy, helpful, cheerful and persevering!!

We pray you a day of fulfillment, joy and time with your friends. I am so happy your birthday is on a Sunday and that your Mass is on your day where we will be joining you as one in prayer and thanksgiving; the Blessed Mother will bestow special blessings through Her son just for you.

May all of your prayers be answered and all of your dreams come true. You are special to The Father as you are our life and soul.

We love you as we love our God. Lead, Kindly Light!
Mama and Dada

22. Blessed Thirtieth Birthday, Dear Son!

You are in the British Virgin Islands with your father's birth! How appropriate that you are drawn to the waters of peace and tranquil beauty as you are at peace within yourself. That is your best gift to us!

I have recently reiterated to you for the umpteenth time the week before and during your birthing when MawMaw and PawPaw were with us in Aurora, CO and how we went to the Lowry Air Force Base to purchase a Weber for your father's birthday on the day after you were born and not the day of because MawMaw told the doctor that you were to have your own birthday and you do!! We four adults could not hold you enough, rock and kiss on you enough just overall stare at your every fiber, and wonder at the greatest gift we could ever receive. He breathed life into you and you were born to us your most grateful parents, who received life whole and new as we had never know it before.

Your thoughts may be recalling your thirty years of extensive travel, knowledge gained, experiences that count, readings, blessings of faith, health, home, work, friends and serving others which is on the road to wisdom. We are so very proud of you as you are in a field of labor that is utilizing your gifts and talents always building a foundation for the years ahead of service to others through Marketing and Business Consulting! To labor is noble and sacramental for it offers all good things to The Father who is forever calling you to be whom He created to be in His image and likeness.

You've been away from home twelve years now and we can hardly believe it for the time has flown; we watched and monitored your daily growth and time with us never taking it all for granted and still it took wings and flew!

We send you our blessing, love and total and complete support all the days and years ahead for we love you more than life itself and think of you all of our waking hours as we place you in the hands of The Father and in the mantle of the Blessed Mother.

"May the Lord bless and keep you!
May the Lord let His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you!
May the Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace."

Lead, Kindly Light! And, stay in the boat!!
Daddy and Mama

P.S's! Daddy said to call the minute you are in a phone-home- zone or text Ms. Renee!!! We want to hear your 30-year-old voice compared to your 29-year-old voice!! I remember telling you at age 10 that you will be in a two-digit age bracket until you're not; thirty seems as significant.
O, and please re-read this entire link which Mama writes to your lovin-lovin heart!

