

Chocolate for the Souls of St. Leo's

Things happen. At my usual sojourn on Tuesday mornings at the Sunflower Café on the Plaza with the Shea's and Randy Coleman-Riese, Randy presented us with a St. Leo's parish publication from around 1998-2000 under the title shown above. I had forgotten completely about it.

It was a project in which parishioners up to that period were invited to write an essay, long or short, about their faith story – I think the Youth Ministry leaders were behind it – and JoAnn Consiglieri. The writings are almost conversational focusing on some memory of what it means to be Catholic. Parents' brief accounts of a child's experience – not always of church - are fun to read.

This one was heard during a CCD class: *While working on their poster projects of "I Am Special," the children were asked to color a birthday cake and draw candles on top . . . corresponding to their age. Chirped one little boy, "Oh, yeah, I know all about candles. They were for before we had electrocution."*

Another was titled *A Call in the Night: My grandpa had been sick for quite a while, and eventually, we realized death was near. On the day he died, our phone rang at exactly 5 o'clock. There was only one ring, which was odd . . . so early in the morning. Then . . . my grandma called our house from the hospital to say my grandpa had died at 5 o'clock. Our family now believes this one ring was my grandpa saying goodbye.*

June England contributed: *It was a Friday evening wedding rehearsal at St. John the Baptist Church in Chico. I was the matron of honor. Next to me was the ring bearer, a small boy of six who had never been in a Catholic church. This was the 60's, before the church had divested itself of its Gothic trappings. The red sanctuary light glowed, hinting at the life-sized figures imprisoned in their walled recesses. The boy moved in close to me, and looking up at me with big brown eyes, whispered, "Did anyone ever escape?"*

And this one from Gert Dunphy (remember her?): *Since I was an only child, my greatest pleasure was a ride with my favorite uncle, Tom, and his three children . . . He always told us stories (a wild imagination) and sang songs, and my cousins and I joined in, singing as loud as we possibly could. The trips in his car were never, never too long. No one ever asked, "When are we going to get there. . ."*

The titles of the essays were like: *I Remember Uncle Frankie . . . ; Wartime Romance; At the Plate; Daddy's Other Name; First Piano Lessons; You Just Never Know.*

And then there is this one about a woman that sums up all there is to say about our pastor those days: *For what seemed like the 100th time, she could not get up the courage to approach Father O'Hare. A previous marriage was preventing her from being comfortable about talking about remarrying. Just then a voice behind her said, "You've been wanting to talk to me, haven't you, love?" I don't even have to tell you who it was and what happened. The contributor of this event titled it: Divine Intervention.*

Geoff Wood