

From the Rector: *Cherished Memories*

Several times this past year, events happened that caused me to remember times from very long ago. As I watch my parents age, helping my mother remember happy times is part of helping her feel safe. A vast majority of my memories from my childhood are fond memories, ones I remember and smile as my mind relives those times. I would like to share just a few from the parish of my youth, St. Mark's, Lewistown.

St. Mark's was a small to medium sized parish located in the county seat of a rural county. What struck me about so many of the memories were the people involved. For the most part they were the seniors of the parish. Miss Elder was a devoted Sunday school teacher for most of the twenty years I was a member of St. Mark's. She staffed the kindergarten class and continued to be a great influence for many of us through her work at the Lewistown Library. I always remember her sweet smile and kind, gentle hands.

Another fond memory is of Mr. Horace Culbertson. Mr. Culbertson was an attorney and very active in the historical society and other social causes. He noticed my interest in history and made it possible for me to partake in several events/opportunities that would have not been open to a young teen. Because of his influence, I was invited to be a docent for the local historical house, The McCoy residence, which housed much of the county's archives. This, of course, literally opened the doors to the records, books, photos, etc. that are not part of the permanent display. I guess I was a history geek even then!

I also remember other people of the parish simply because of their presence. There was Mrs. Taylor. I actually don't remember her ever saying a single word to me. She is simply remembered because she wore silk taffeta slips and about twenty charm bracelets. Mr. Shoemaker, who sat beside me in choir and was a great friend, and we would give each other a look every time we would hear her coming from the back of the church: swish, swish, jingle, jingle would be the sound all the way up the aisle. The sad part is, that is all I remember of her.

I also know that I am not unique in my memories. It is pleasing to hear your stories as well. So many of you have told me wonderful memories of your times here at St. Mark's, or the parish of your youth. For many of us, we are able to pin-point the adults who had a very positive influence upon our lives. Even General George Marshall, who grew up in my previous parish, had those memories.

From his letter to Rev. Newman dated August 6, 1943:

Your letter recalled to me the days of my youth when Saint Peter's and Mr. Wightman (*the rector at the time*) exercised a profound influence on my character and life. I mentioned Mr. Wightman because while I was a mere boy in my early teens he honored me with his friendship. We often took walks in the country together and I spent many hours with him at the Parish House which had just been constructed.

So, how will our youth remember their time among us? Will they remember you as a Mr. Culbertson or a Mrs. Taylor? I was always taught to respect my elders, as is right, no matter how they treated me. I also wonder what might have happened had I tried to say 'hello' or engage Mrs. Taylor in some way. Would I then have fond memories of her as well? Perhaps she saw us as 'those crazy, disrespectful youth.'

My challenge is to both our adults and our youth. We need to look for ways to engage each other, learn each other's stories, and become part of each other's lives. This doesn't need to be 'organized' or planned. It simply needs to happen. As adults, we need to look for ways that we can 'earn' the

respect of the youth and our youth need to look for ways to be a part of the younger set. By each generation engaging each generation, we engage in the love of Christ by strengthening the bonds of affection between us.

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