

Take A Sad Song And Make It Better

I was very honored to join with the church choir this morning as we said farewell to one of our own. Mark lost his long battle with the nasty "c" word this past week. I first learned of his condition almost half a year ago when I began my own recuperation. Mark's 59 years (while only a blink of an eye) were lived with love, hard work, and a lot of fun.

Until being struck by the illness, he and Barb faithfully climbed the steps to join us on the Sunday mornings we sang at services. He also was an avid classic car enthusiast and the procession outside church this morning was a testament to that (I will not display my ignorance and even attempt to name the makes and models). He was also a passionate music fan. In years past, Mark and a select group of gentlemen made up Stevie and the Studebakers (a 50's-60s doo-wop group). Not entirely sure what became of the group (and their barbershop equivalent, The Edgertones) but they were great fun to watch.

I was still young in their heyday.

Father Art... in the short time he has presided over our masses, he has really endeared himself to the congregation. His message today was full of meaning and a bit of laughter as they have been for the last month or two. He went to a corner and pulled out his 1951 "Something-or-other" saxophone and mashed together three classic 60s tunes ("Blue Moon," "Mbube," and "Hey Jude"), the first two of which had been performed by the Studebakers. The Beatles hit was Mark and Barb's "song." Although Mark and Father Art only knew each other a short time, they are both the same age and were born in the same era. Never pretending to know him anymore than he did, Father described a man who really took "sad songs and made them better." Later, the sax joined the organ and choir for "How Great Thou Art."

The choir sang songs hand picked by Barb (and Mark I am sure) including "Oh, Holy Night." You may ask why in the middle of August one would choose to have a Christmas carol sang at a funeral. I have been honored to have attended two in which the untraditional seemed traditional. Another tribute to Mark's legacy was the number of choir members who sang this morning. Usually, we have no more than ten. We had double that and more today, even some from a neighboring parish.

Another good guy to join the heavenly chorus. May we all strive to make our own sad songs better.

Thoughts on a new day

Today had a rough start. I knew that in advance, so I did little things to prepare for it. One was taking an entire day of vacation, instead of just a partial day. Another was to go with the flow of the day.

I went to the funeral of a young man I barely knew. I do know his parents. I know his father very well. We've worked together for that past 16+ years.

Funerals something I generally try to avoid. I've been that way all my life, but for the past 5+ years I've really developed an immense dislike for them. I will go to them when people I know need support I might be able to give. It was still a rough morning.

As to going with the flow... Well after the funeral I thought it would be nice to spend some time with friends. A little time not thinking about the final aspect of life. It was a good choice. Lunch with good friends made the difference in the day.

Just thought I would share.

Morbid topic, consider yourself warned

Yes, this will be a post about death, so if you don't want to read about it, stop right here. The next paragraph will be about some silly stuff just in case you failed to be driven away. I don't want anyone to say they saw the morbid stuff too quick.

Heavy rains this past week or so caused a small short in one of my trucks turn signal lights. I could tell because when I turned a corner the blinker would start going really fast, and then it would slow down after I started going straight again. The increased blinker speed is to let me know there is a turn signal light out. Just found that interesting. This summer is just flying by, I noticed our local Wally World already had school supplies out. So we jump past summer picnic season to school after the 4th of July. Makes me wonder what date they use in other parts of the world.

Morbid stuff starts now....

My eldest daughter, her husband and I were talking about what to do with our bodies after we die. I was thinking about having my ashes turned to [diamonds](#) for each of my daughters. (If I can ever afford to do that, it is an expensive way to take care of a dead body.) Then I thought it would be nice to donate my body to science after removing any organs that can be used in transplants. We did get a little creative on this too. Like donating my skeleton to my old high school. I imagine that would be something. Or maybe encasing the said

skeleton in Acrylic. Ashes mixed in with wood finishes was talked about, or even mixing the ashes with cement or tile mud. All very interesting things that could be done.

The one thing we talked about that I though was really interesting was the idea of donating my body to a [Body Farm](#). I thought that was a very interesting concept. I had not heard of this before my son-in-law mentioned that it was what he was interested in. What made this more interesting is that I received an email from www.howstuffworks.com about the same subject. Then I did a [Google search](#) on the same topic.

Not only does donating your body to a body farm make a lot of sense financially (funerals and burial/cremation are very expensive), it also makes sense in a 'Green' way. An added bonus is that future CSIs can learn a lot from watching a body decompose. The "Green" way is that you skip the added fuel and machinery needed to put a body in a big concrete block. Also skipped is the amount of fuel needed to completely consume a human body when it is cremated. What our bodies will never get recycled by the planet when surrounded by tons of concrete. In the body farm the bodies are left exposed to the elements with the normal cycle of nature, doing what it does so well, using what is left over to support and renew the environment. I like the idea, but then again, the old pine boxes we used to use allowed the remains to be recycled by nature.

I do understand the other environmental needs to make sure that disease isn't spread, but I think we tend to go way overboard with the complete enclosure in concrete.

Now my daughter, the genealogist, wants to make sure we put a plaque up somewhere for future generations. I don't know if I see the point in that, but for her I would be willing. I have a feeling future genealogists will have a better way of finding out about their ancestors. The internet will be crawling with information if it isn't already.

So, I will be looking into setting up my donation to a Body Farm, unless I win a big lottery. I kind of like the idea of my girls being able to say "Daddy is forever..." Morbid sense of humor, true, but it still tickles me.