

Jim's Perspective...

Laughing – Something Funny – is Good for the Soul

The grandkids were gathered together in the family room. I was in the living room with Janie. Suddenly, the grandkids burst into laughter. The three of them ran into the living room, still laughing hysterically. They all stood in front of me. One of them said, “Papa, why do you like to get a magazine about underwear?” They then placed in front of me a legal publication (that was sitting on a table in the family room) issued by the Tort, Trial and Insurance Practice Section of the American Bar Association. This magazine is a quarterly publication issued by this professional section of the ABA. On the cover of the magazine, this publication is titled *The Brief*. The grandkids thought this reference to “brief” meant that the magazine was all about underwear! Janie and I got a good laugh out of that! I explained to them that a legal brief is a document filed with a court of law. The grandkids had no concept of that. They continued to look at me and laugh a little. Their expressions suggested that they thought I was making this up so that I didn’t have to admit I subscribed to an underwear magazine. As they looked through the magazine, I do think they began to accept that it was not about underwear since there were no pictures of underwear in the magazine. They may have also realized that the underwear word is “briefs” not “brief.” Eventually, they took off and started playing again in the family room. It was all very funny! We still chuckle about it!

Last week I had lunch with two of my long-time best friends, Tom and Mike. I have been friends with Tom since kindergarten at Holy Family Catholic School (Now Cathedral of the Risen Christ School) in Lincoln. Mike and I have been friends since ninth grade when he moved to Lincoln from McCook and his family became parishioners at Holy Family. The three of us hunted and fished together for a number of years. We all played football at Pius X High School. We did many things together until we all went off to college.

Our luncheon conversation of course involved a discussion of current events, but eventually, we drifted off to reminisce about our time together many years ago when we were young men. Our trip down memory lane fixated on an activity we did in ninth grade. Sometime during the spring semester of 1964, a new, young, priest arrived at Holy Family Parish. He was born and raised in Ireland, and only came to America to attend a seminary and become a priest. Once ordained, he was sent to Holy Family. He was a very nice young man and he had a very heavy Irish accent. In the fall of 1964, when we were all starting ninth grade, the Irish priest decided to teach the ninth grade boys how to play soccer, which he played while growing up in Ireland. We played soccer during recess that was scheduled after lunch. It was played on an asphalt parking lot located between the church and school. All of the boys were divided into two random teams by the priest. I think we played for about half-an-hour. What was so funny about the soccer game, was that the priest played too. The three of us were laughing during lunch about how competitive the priest was. He hated to lose a soccer game. He was very aggressive and played a very rough style of soccer. We also laughed about this game because when recess was over, the priest insisted we gather around him and he gave us a blessing before went back in the school. We all agreed that this gesture was performed so that there would be no hard feelings about what happened in the soccer game. This soccer game was also very unique for us because no one played soccer back in 1964. It was not a school sport. So we were learning a European sport that no other students in Lincoln knew anything about. We laughed too, during lunch, about how we would discuss the fine techniques, and rules, of soccer at “boy/girl dances”, and invariably, the girls gathered around us – so fascinated about this new sport. What an advantage we had over all the other boys! Ha Ha!

Life can be very funny! Who would have ever thought that in 1955, when Tom and I became good friends in kindergarten, that roughly ten years later, in ninth grade, the two of us would be playing soccer in the school/church parking lot, and competing against a young priest born and raised in Ireland! Life can be a random thing with many twists and turns! So, it was a fun lunch with Tom and Mike, and once again I felt so lucky to have their friendship. It was also refreshing and uplifting to be with two guys who were a lot like me! The lunch truly reflected the beauty of life!

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