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Miscellaneous Musings by FunGirlDi

There is no denying it any longer – the world has gone off its rocker. Things that used to be wrong are now right and right things are now wrong.

Last year I changed everything in my life. I got divorced, sold my dream house, packed up all my belongings and returned to where I started – Ely, Minnesota. It is true that change is not easy, and I found out that statement is brutally true.

I grew up in a family with two devout Catholic parents. Like most of my Catholic friends, we were “forced” to go to church every week, attend Catechism every school year until we made our Confirmation in 11th grade.



Father Charlie Friebohle, the new Pastor at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Ely.

After we raised our kids Catholic and had done what we promised to do which was, “Accept children lovingly from God and bring them up according to the law of Christ and His Church,” I started to miss an occasional Sunday Mass until I quit attending altogether. I figured my work was done and I needed to get on with the business of living.

I was so dismissed from my faith that I wasn't even a C&E Catholic. That means a Christmas and Easter Catholic because those were the only two times a year some would attend Mass. I never stopped believing in God, however, and saw prayers answered during my former husband's recovery from multiple strokes several years ago. I saw firsthand the power of prayer.

I suffered through most of my first year of my new life in Ely. I used the word suffered because change is never easy and going through a divorce is excruciatingly painful. Marriage is hard, divorce is hard...choose your hard.

Unless you are independently wealthy, the economy has made it tough to retire on a fixed income. Since I have a few years to go before I can get on Medicare, I must pay for my benefits each month, which is about the equivalent of a house payment or a luxury automobile.

Because of the rising cost of living, I decided I needed to get a part-time job. I would watch the job postings in the Ely Echo and The Ely Shopper, and nothing looked interesting enough that I would want to come out of retirement to do.

I heard St. Anthony's was looking for a secretary. I was stopped by a couple of parishioners telling me that the church needed a secretary, and I would be a perfect fit for the job. I thought long and hard about it and I took too long because another woman was hired. I shrugged my shoulders and told myself it wasn't meant to be. I can't lie, I was relieved and I felt the pressure was off.

A few months later, I found out that the job was open again. Subconsciously, I was stopping myself because I knew there would need to be some life changes I would have to make if I wanted to be the face of St. Anthony's.

Since I hadn't gone to church for almost 15 years, I was a very rusty Catholic and, I admitted out loud that I was worse than rusty. I seriously never paid much attention to what was going on and I am embarrassed to admit this fact. I knew if I were to get the job, I would have

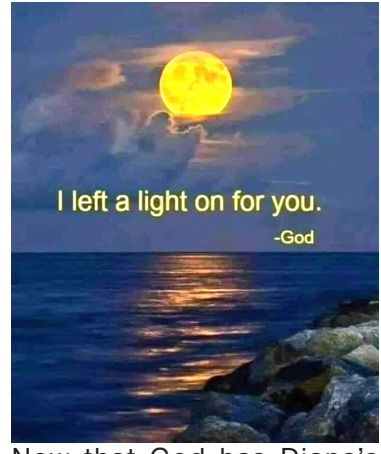
to “fly right”. I would have to go to weekly Mass again, but more than that I would need to concentrate on being a Catholic – a real Catholic.

In February, it took a lot to get up the courage to make the phone call to St. Anthony's to find out what I would need to do to apply for the secretary/bookkeeper position. I got in touch with Deacon Greg Hutar, who was running St. Anthony's, since Father Bill Skarich fell ill the previous August.

Deacon Greg emailed an application to me, which I hesitantly filled out at my kitchen table. I pondered who I would list as my four references. I quickly jotted down the first three. I wasn't sure who my fourth would be until it hit me. Immediately in the space I wrote “God.” In the next space I wrote, “He knows me better than anyone.” I landed the job and started in March.

I have realized one thing in the past six months – it is beyond true that God puts you where you are supposed to be. There it is... I used the ‘G’ word.

In this crazy divided world, stability is available every day when I walk through the door of St. Anthony's Rectory/Office. I have found peace and contentment that alluded me for a very long time. When you have peace in your mind, body, heart, and soul, I have discovered you truly have it all.



Now that God has Diana's attention, she is paying attention to many references to and about Him.

Over many years, I worked many jobs and met people from many different walks of life. I was always looking for a place where I really felt I belonged. Again, Dorothy Gale from Kansas famous line rings true, “Happiness is in your own backyard.”

Over the past decade and a half, I joined in with the masses and complained about the Catholic Church. I would say I didn't need to go to Reconciliation (Confession) because I could talk to God myself. To be honest, I didn't even do that. Like my father used to say, “Talk is cheap.” I was invited to attend other churches, but sweetly declined as I wasn't to the point where I wanted to hang up my Catholic shoes permanently.



St. Anthony's Catholic Church on Camp Street in Ely. Its location is sometimes referred to as, “The church at the top of Holy Hill.”

In July, St. Anthony's got a new priest – Father Charlie Friebohle. He is in his early 30s and wears a beard – a rather long one. This is his first time in a leading role as the new Pastor of St. Anthony's.

The first time I met him, I was shocked by his thick, long beard. I had heard he had a beard, but not a BEARD! After I got past his facial hair, I noticed an air about him that was unusual, but in a good way. I always heard there are people that are noticeably filled with the Holy Spirit, and I did not understand what that meant. Enter Father Charlie – a man filled with the Grace of God and placed where he needs to be, but more so, a place

that desperately needed him.

I've never met anyone quite like Father Charlie. He is soft spoken, articulate, intelligent and ardent about his calling to serve the Lord God our Savior. He is passionate about the Sacraments that are the cornerstone of the Catholic faith. He is an old soul and drawn to many of the time-honored traditions of the Catholic Church.

In our current world, being a Catholic is viewed by many as cultish or archaic because of the rules followed. Women are not allowed to be priests. That will never change. Catholic bashing has become somewhat of a sport and the sexual abuse by some priests has overshadowed many of the wonderful priests who have given their lives to lead others to God in the Catholic faith.

I wonder why it's okay to bash Catholicism, but if you say a negative word about the Jewish or Muslim faiths, you are called an antisemitic or Islamophobic? How about it stops for every religion?

I have returned to weekly Mass and am taking time to learn more about my religion. Who knew it could feel so good to be a part of something that I used to view as a disruption? The Church is filled with smiles and love and a closeness to God that I missed for most of my life – even when I was a fake practicing Catholic in years past.

One of my biggest realizations was that the highway to heaven is not a freeway. We must do work on earth to make a place for ourselves after we pass from this life. I have said and hear the statement, “I'll probably go to heaven, I haven't killed anyone.” That statement is certainly not a truthful belief. We must give to get like most anything else in this world and we have work to do.

I am paying attention like I never have before. In my formative years, when attending Catechism, we spent our time memorizing and reciting prayers from week to week – that's what I remember. Release time from school meant a walk from school to the church with a stop at Frank's Variety Store for some Lemonheads or Boston Baked Beans. The time spent in class was probably 30 minutes and several of those were spent by the volunteer teachers trying to calm the kids down from the vigorous walk and massive sugar highs.

We are on this earth for such a short time. When I was younger, I thought I had forever. As a woman in my early 60s, I am amazed at the speed of the passing years. We focus so much of our attention on our lives here on earth but are missing what will happen after we are finished here.

Our time on earth is a dress rehearsal while we wait for the curtain to fall and we head for eternity. Heaven isn't a sure thing for any

of us just because we think we are “not that bad.” We must sacrifice some here to earn our angel wings. Most of us have been taught right from wrong and we know when we are not living the way we should.

We cannot wrap our minds around eternity because of what we have become used to on earth. We are always in a state of flux and whether we like it or not, all things have endings. Theology explains eternity as endless life after death. If I work hard for the rest of my life, I'm hoping to be heaven bound. Heaven is defined in Theology as a state of being eternally in the presence of God. Sure beats the other direction.

The ‘G’ Word...



In early August, Ely lost one of its most wonderful citizens, Paulie Ivancich, who was the owner of the Ely Dairy Queen. Shortly before his death, when he knew he couldn't stay on this earth for much longer, he coined the phrase that all could see on the marquee at the Ely State Theatre. RIP P.I. – you knew what it was all about.

As for me, I have started and will continue to serve the Lord and learn more about all that I ignored for so many years. I use the ‘G’ word quite often and I am delighting and embracing my rediscovered reentry in my Catholic faith.

Before March, I would pass over posts about God, the Bible or anything religious and I can't put my finger on exactly why I would do that. I was a bit afraid perhaps of “getting ‘that’ way” or being accused of being a “bible banger.” I let peer pressure and fear stop me from getting to understand and know God.

But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father in heaven.
Matthew 10:33

Peace, love, and contentment is within everyone's reach. The secret lies with God.

For the first time in my life, I must share a bible verse that speaks to me. It is Matthew 10:33, which says: “Whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.” Whoa – that sure is worthy of attention by everyone.

Mass on Sunday is sparsely attended – not like the days when I was a child, and the church was packed at just about every Mass. Priests are few and far between and are spread thin to cover multiple churches. Father Charlie has not only St. Anthony Parish, but also St. Pius X in Babbitt.

With all the turmoil in our world and projections and predictions that it will become worse, I was starting to panic when I would ponder about how much worse it was going to get for my children and grandchildren. My thoughts on that subject changed when I came upon this letter on Facebook:

Mamas and Grandmas - Don't feel sorry for or fear for your kids because the world they are going to grow up in is not what it used to be. God created them and called them for the exact moment in time that their life wasn't a coincidence or an accident.

Raise them up to know the power they walk in as children of God. Train them up in the authority of His word. Teach them to walk in faith knowing that God is in control. Empower them to know they can change the world. Don't teach them to be fearful and disheartened by the state of the world but hopeful that they can do something about it.

Every person in all of history has been placed in the time that they were in because of God's sovereign plan. He knew Daniel could handle the lion's den. He knew David could handle Goliath. He knew Esther could handle Haman. He knew Peter could handle persecution.

He knows that your child can handle whatever challenge they face in their life he created them specifically for it!

Don't be scared for your children but be honored that God chose you to parent the generation that is facing the biggest challenges of our lifetime. Rise up to the challenge. Raise Daniels, David, Esthers and Peters!

God isn't scratching his head wondering what He's going to do with this mess of a world. He has an army He's raising up to drive back the darkness and make Him known all over the earth.

Don't let your fears steal the greatness God placed in them. I know it's hard to imagine them as anything besides our sweet little babies, and we just want to protect them from anything that could ever be hard on them, but they were born for such a time as this.”
~ Alex Cravens

For anyone who is flailing through life and not knowing what your purpose is or why you are here, it would be an opportune time to return to church or worship. I invite anyone to check out the Catholic faith and learn more about the steep history and foundation.

When you find something wonderful, it is human nature that people wish to share it with others. In a world gone mad, prayer is a powerful tool and knowing that Good will win over Evil. At the end of every Mass at St. Anthony's, we recite the Prayer of Saint Michael the Archangel. I will end with this prayer that gives me hope every time I say it:

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; And do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host - by the divine power of God- thrust into hell, Satan and all the evil spirits, who roam throughout the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.



Dear God.

May peace, hope and serenity find those reading this. Today and always.