

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Growing Up In Bandera

By Glenn Clark

Special to the Prophet

Sunday mornings at the Clark's residence back in the day could best be described as a madhouse. My mom was always the first to rise and get started. Then on to her ritual of getting everyone out of bed while preparing breakfast. Six kids and one bathroom meant there was plenty reason for total chaos as we scrambled and struggled to get ourselves church ready.

Thinking back to what we experienced as a Sunday morning Catholic family with six kids I can only imagine what it must have been like at Willie Kalka's place. His household was blessed with double that many kids and one more as I recall. Now I'm thinking back and wondering how they all got to church on time. Did they make two trips to town or did they split up and attend different masses?

I was able to avoid the morning rush when I was scheduled for early mass altar boy duty. One thing I liked about that was I didn't have to be picky about how I dressed because I got to wear a cassock and surplice which covered my clothes. Credit Google for helping me remember what altar boy wear was called. And a special thanks to Miss Annie who took care of all things at St. Stanislaus Church in those early times.

I was also able to avoid my mom's prechurch ear inspection when I left the house early. Spit cleaning of my ears with a kleenex is a haunting memory. Kleenex were always on hand to be used for that and other things like a girl's head cover which was a requirement back then when they entered church.

Leaving church after serving early mass I had already begun to devise my plan on how to avoid Father Victor as he scoured the neighborhood

later in search of an altar boy to accompany him to Lakehills for the late mass at St. Victor Chapel. My mother was notorious for offering my services. I guess she was trying to rack up some afterlife points while totally disregarding my need for freedom. Anyway, I tried to make myself as invisible as possible.

Ben Pyka who was one of the oldtimers of the parish during my altar boy days always attended early mass and would give me a quarter after church services. Sometimes I had to hang around church for a while until he accidentally ran into me. A quarter was a pretty good reward back in those days.

Father Victor was rumored to be lead footed when behind the wheel of his old Ford station wagon. I'm here to testify that it was indeed a fact. I rode many Sundays with him as he attempted to straighten out that old highway to the lake. I firmly believed at times that Jesus had his hands on the wheel too so I could continue my Growing Up In Bandera journey.

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