

My Walk With God

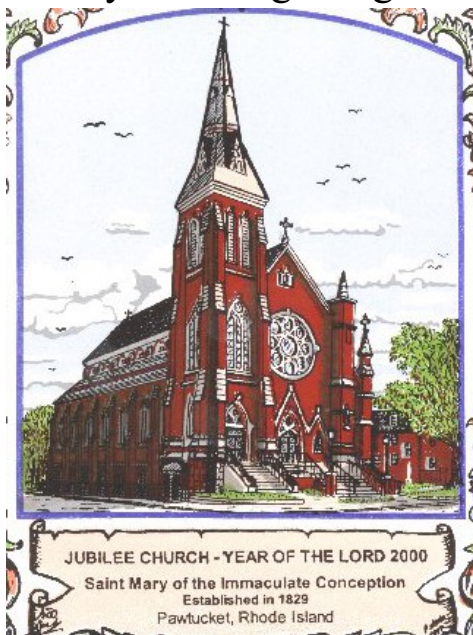
The Beginning

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The year, 1936, was a difficult time in the course of human events. The world was struggling to emerge from the great depression. War was over the horizon in Europe. Energy shortages in the East was driving the Orient into great conflict with one country forcing its will upon another. In order to secure its needs, Japan had invaded the mainland of East Asia. America observed the ensuing events from a distance. While some in the country see the forthcoming events as a great threat to world peace, others feel that due to the separation of our country, by two oceans, North America would be insulated from these world conflicts. Apprehension and anxiety were engulfing the social order.



JUBILEE CHURCH - YEAR OF THE LORD 2000
Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception
Established in 1829
Pawtucket, Rhode Island

Into this climate God sees fit to continue with His creation of new life throughout the world. He touches parents everywhere and conception of humanity continues to take place. We are all touched by God, and we will then accept or reject His friendship for our lives. Nine months after I was touched, I took my first breath of air, the air that God has provided for all of His creation. I have the honor and advantage of Baptism shortly after my birth, when God touched me again, The Father, His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit of God took up earthly residence within me.

While I was growing as a child, gaining confidence and knowledge,
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Holy Spirit helped guide my understanding of the natural law within me. As my parents shared their experience of life with me, they sent me to school, where, with the help of my teachers, I gained a wider view of the world that God had created for us all, and of my relationship with Him. It was then, at the age of 6, that I learned it was God who made me out of His desire to share His love with me as well as with all other people. He touched me again.

I learned that He made, not only me, but everything. The Earth and all it contains, the sun and the moon, and all the stars. I found out more about Him in the stories of the Book of Genesis. It was all amazing. I couldn't wait to meet God and to live with Him forever. Who knew it would be more than 85 years of waiting, for I am still happily on that journey.

With my first realization that there was more to life than just my personal awareness of things around me, as I remember, it was at the celebration of Christmas. My father brought home this great tree to put in our living room. By today's standards, it was rather spindal-ly, but to a 4 year old it was an adventure. It was strung with lights and decorated with glass ornaments and tinsel. At night, it glowed with all the colors of the rainbow.

Under the branches was set a little stable, with figures of people and animals, like a little country scene. Above the little stable, there was one white light framed by a shiny tin star, and an angel who sat on top of the house. My mother described the scene to me; the angels singing Glory to God in the Highest, the shepherds, hearing their message, followed the star to the stable where Mary and Joseph and a little Baby was lying in a manger. The little baby was Jesus the Son of God. From that time on, a Christmas Tree was incomplete without a nativity scene under it. I could never understand why so many people didn't display this acknowledgment of Jesus birth. When we went to Mass at Christmas time, the presence of Jesus was always unmistakable. The Nativity scene in St Mary's Church was special. A massive cluster of trees covered with blue lights surrounded the display. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph were the centerpiece; highlighted by a bright light from the star positioned overhead. The twilight simulated by a blue glow from the illuminated trees gave a peaceful feeling of a cold winters night, where the shepherds were watching over their sheep, and the angels were singing.

The church building was an awesome thing for a child especially at Christmas time. This unique aura, remained within the church throughout

the year. When entering through the main doors, the expanse of the church interior overwhelmed me as a child, and is still an awesome sight today. The pews were filled with people, all intent on one purpose; the presence of God in their midst. There were chandeliers filled with electric lights that simulated candles, positioned between massive pillars holding up the ceiling on either side of the church. It was a grand sight, with light streaming in through stained glass windows.



The windows themselves looked as if they reached to the sky, with beautiful displays of the saints and scenes of life, as if, popping off the pages of bible stories. There was music that sounded as though it came from heaven; but of course it came pumped out of the giant pipes of the great organ in the choir loft. As I approached the front of the church interior, I could not miss seeing the great altar in the center, made of white marble, and adorned by statue images of the saints and of Holy Mary herself, who was the patroness of our Parish. In the center of the altar was a golden tabernacle, where a beautiful red glass globe was illuminated by a bright vigil candle within; announcing that Jesus is in repose, body, blood, soul and divinity as The Eucharist. There were minor altars on the left and right sides of the church. These altars, also of white marble, were adorned with single images of Mary on the left altar and St. Joseph on the right one. All was well, Jesus present in the center with images of His Mother Mary on His right and St. Joseph, His foster father, on His left; The Holy Family!

When entering the church, there was an unquestionable sense of awe and peace that always came over me. Much of it was probably due to the grandeur of the place, but most of all, it was because my mother told me that it was God's house and that He was always there even though we could not see Him. He made us, and all the world that He gives to us, because He loves us.

War time had gripped the country and we were not immune to it, even as a 5 year old. I began my formal instruction and introduction to God in the "basement" of St. Mary's Church. The basement had been the original church when construction began before the civil war. It was in bad shape, but it was absolutely recognizable as a Church. Later, we were taught by the

Sisters of Mercy from our parish school. Paint was peeling from the ceiling and there was dust everywhere. We, 6 year old's, who regularly attended public school, were arranged in the pews on one side of the old church. Our teacher wore a nun's habit, so we knew she was sent from heaven and she knew a lot about God.

-The lesson began: Who made you? = A -God made me.
Who is God? =A-God is the creator and maker of all things.
Why did God Make you? = A -God made me to know Him, to love Him, to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in Heaven. And the lessons went on - - .

There were enough remnants left of the old church that showed it unmistakably as God's house; in this part of Pawtucket, Rhode Island. As our teacher told us about God and what He has done for us, we learned about Adam and Eve. God loved them and walked with them in the garden. He provided the perfect environment full of beauty, comfort and wonder for all of His creations. I thought, 'how lucky they were!' to be friends with such a wonderful God! Then we heard the rest of the story. The evil snake, the devil ruined everything. Of course I didn't put much blame on Adam or Eve. They were deceived by that snake. But how could they be? They didn't need that apple. There must have been hundreds of other apple trees in the garden. What was so special about that one? I guess it was, that it was forbidden. God had told them not to eat from that particular tree. The devil, tempted them with the apple and convinced them with his lies that they couldn't take God's word for it, they had to know why; So they ate the apple from that forbidden tree.

As a child, I saw this as disobedience of God, who was worthy of their respect, because He had made them and given them that beautiful garden. Unfortunately, they did something that they were told not to do, and now they had to pay the price. I didn't quite understand why that price, for their original sin, had to be paid by everyone else. It didn't matter though because God was still kind to them, even though they were banished from the garden. He gave them clothes and provided a world where they could hunt for their food and grow good things to eat and build their own shelters. "God was good" and he still loved them.

Our teacher, who we called "Sister", because we saw her as a special friend of God, told us that when we were Baptized, the stain of that original sin, of Adam & Eve, had been removed from our soul. It was now up to us

whether we would be friends with God, and live the way He wants us to live. Sister then told us more stories about the first people who lived on earth after Adam and Eve. There was Cain & Able, Noah & his family with the arc and all the animals, Sodom & Gomorrah; the Tower of Babel; Abraham; and Moses, and the 10 Commandments of God. All of these people lived in places where there were other people who did not want to be friends with God. Those others were selfish and disrespectful to one another. They took what was not theirs and destroyed anything that got in their way. God was not pleased and punished them, but there were always good people whom God would save and help to rebuild their societies, like Lot, Noah, Abraham and Moses. I wanted to be a friend of God like them so that God would want to help me too.

When God gave Moses His 10 Commandments, He was giving the people the rule to live by, and if they followed the rule, they would always live happily as God's friends. Moses was one of the Hebrew people that God had chosen to show the world how to live as friends of God.

During the weeks that Sister had been telling us about God, she also told us that we could talk with Him in our prayers. She taught us the "Our Father" *who art in heaven...* so that when we talked with Him, we would always remember who he is. She said that when we begin to pray we should always use the Sign Of The Cross. "In the name of The Father" (because God is our father in heaven and He is always thinking about us) we touch our foreheads. "And of The Son", (because He sent Jesus, *to save us from our sins*, as a boy just like us when he came on the first Christmas) we touch our stomach to remind us that God became a man like one of us. "And of The Holy Spirit" (we touch our shoulders left to right, for the Spirit comes to us as if to keep us warm in His Grace.) AMEN! Whenever we said or heard the name of Jesus we all bowed our heads along with Sister in order to give reverence and respect to Jesus.

Our prayers were confirmed and encouraged by our parents. Every night when my brothers and I went to bed, my father or mother would come into our bedroom. When we were in bed, my parents would encourage us to pray together with them. We prayed in English like we learned in class at church, and my mother would pray in French, like she learned too pray as a child. It didn't matter what language a person prayed in because God spoke all languages, especially the language of our hearts. There was also the standard, "Now I lay me down to sleep"- , a comfort for me, as a child, who was afraid of the dark.

I knew that there was a spiritual world beyond what I could see. My grandmother and parents had told me about my guardian angel and all the other angels. They also told me about Satan, the devil, who tempted Adam and Eve in the garden and caused them to fall into sin. I knew from my own experience as well, for every night when I went to sleep, I saw the spirit of a little old man who lived in our basement. He lived in the spirit world, but every night I could see him in reality. He could only be seen in the dark, but he was always there. He was an ugly creature with a square nose that looked like a pig, and if he touched anyone they would become like him. He was so real that I could never go into our basement without a light and I could never go alone. My mother told me not to worry about him because my guardian angel would always protect me, especially, because I prayed to God and my guardian angel for protection every night, before I went to sleep. The spirit world had always been very real to me, for that is where God and His angels lived. The devil and his angels were also part of the spirit world, but they had all disobeyed God and could not live with Him. The devil and his angels, all prowled about the earth looking for people to influence and convince them that their dark side of the spirit world, was better than, the light and loving world of God.

I knew that all these things were true, but as a child I didn't understand the full significance of any of it. I looked upon all of this as the world as it was for me. I thought that it was only between me and God. All of the other people around me were placed here to help me. Of course I didn't understand the significance of time and it didn't dawn on me that there was ever a time before my own. To me, all of the stories about creation only began when I began and even though they were true in themselves, they did not exist beyond my own life. My parents would tell me stories of "the olden days", and I'm sure they were real for them but for me they were only imagination, even though everyone else saw them as true. This introverted view of reality probably continued throughout my childhood, and even as a young teenager. I can say that I was happy in my own little world, me and Jesus; for it was Jesus and His mother Mary who gave me comfort whenever I felt distress.

Now, as I was 6 years old, it was time for my First Holy Communion preparation. We as children of the first communion class had our instructions in the basement of the church. It was on Sunday mornings before Mass began upstairs in the 'real' church. Sister told us about the first Christmas and why Jesus (*and we all bowed our heads*) was born at that

time. After our instructions, we would go upstairs to attend Mass with the rest of the parish. All of the children sat together with their class in the center of the church upstairs. The girls sat on the left (Mary's) side of the church, and boys on the right (St. Joseph's) side. The younger classes sat towards the front and the older classes sat to the rear. The sister in charge of each class was always there with her children to observe our behavior. When we entered our pew, we all (genuflected) bowed down on our right knee to give reverence to Jesus who was present in the tabernacle.

I knew that we had to behave because we were in God's house and He could see us all at every moment. During the Mass it was especially important to be at our best behavior, because Jesus would be there in person, at Communion time. The music brought us closer to God at that time also. At first there was: "Oh Sacrament Most Holy", *Oh sacrament divine, all praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine*. Then there was "O Lord I Am Not Worthy", *that Thou should come to me, but speak the words of comfort, my spirit, healed shall be*. When The Mass was over, there was always; "Holy God We Praise Thy Name", (the great organ would be pounding out the base notes that vibrated through us all), *Lord of all we bow before Thee, all on earth Thy scepter claim, all in heaven above adore Thee, Infinite Thy vast domain, everlasting is Thy Reign*.

When Jesus appeared on the altar at the Consecration, I could see His face in the Host as the priest raised it for our adoration. I knew that it was a magnificent point in the Mass, as the bells rang out in announcement that Jesus was present on the altar.

Throughout these weeks before spring time, when our first communion class was preparing to receive Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, Sister, our teacher, saw to it that we all knew the 10 Commandments of God, as He had given them to Moses. We learned about Moses and how God had saved the Jews from slavery in Egypt. The Jews were God's chosen people and I wanted to be chosen by God too. Even after God saved his people from the Egyptians, they were not always faithful to Him. I couldn't understand why. If they didn't follow the 10 Commandments, their disobedience meant that they could not go to Heaven and live with God when they died; Just like when Adam & Eve sinned, they were exiled from The Garden of Paradise.

Sister told us that when we were Baptized, that stain of Adam & Eve's Original Sin was washed from our soul and if we obeyed the Commandments, we could go to Heaven and live with God when our life

here on earth came to an end. This only happened because Jesus came at Christmas and died in reparation for our sins, and opened the gates of Heaven, so all people who love God could now go and live with Him in heaven when their lives here in this world came to an end.

During the next few months, we learned more about God and what hopes He has for us. Sister taught us more prayers to be memorized so that we could all talk with God together as a class, have our thoughts organized and mostly centered on God while we prayed.

Now that we attended The Mass on Sundays, in the upper church, after our lessons in the old basement; we were able to see many more wonders of the interior of the church itself. The marble altar rail separated the people from the sanctuary, where the priest celebrated the Holy Mass. Inside the sanctuary, was a holy place reserved for the priest and his assistants; that is altar boys and other priests. My older brother became an altar boy and I was very jealous of him. Later on I learned that jealousy was not good, but I guess that I really wanted to be doing the wonderful things that he got to do, being older. Of course I didn't know at the time that first I had to learn all of the Mass parts in Latin in order to be able to assist at Mass. I don't think that I could have ever done it. The people all remained on their side of the altar rail during Mass, while the priest and altar boys were on the sanctuary side. The people approached the altar rail during communion time when they knelled to receive the Body of Christ in Holy Communion. The walls of the church were decorated between the windows with large bass-relief pictures portraying the Passion of Christ when He was crucified and died for us.

Towards the end of winter time, all of us children would attend church every Friday afternoon at 3 O'Clock. Sometimes we attended with my mother and then we didn't have to sit as a class but we could sit with our parents. There would be a procession around the church with a giant crucifix carried by an altar boy, flanked by two blazing candles, followed by the priest and another altar boy who carried a golden device that was always smoking. As they processed, the organ would sound with this great hymn, *"At the cross, Her station keeping, Stood the mournful mother weeping, Close to Jesus, to the last."* The procession would stop at the first picture which I later learned was the first of the Stations of the Cross. The priest would say *"We adore Thee O Christ and we bless The;"* and we would all respond, *"because by Thy Holy Cross Thou Hast redeemed the world."* We would all bow down on one knee

in reverence of what Jesus had been going through for us. Now there was another person who would announce to us the story of what was happening in the picture. It was all very impressive. Then the procession would continue, the organ would sound again and the hymn would be sung.

The process would continue through all 14 stations. It was my first experience of what Jesus had done for me, and how my sin and all the sins of the world had caused Jesus to suffer so much. I wanted to walk with Him and help Him on His way to Calvary. Anything to make it easier for Jesus is what I hoped for. I resolved that I would never do anything that would cause Him to be sad or to suffer. *How wrong I was!* Finally, as the procession was coming to an end, Jesus had been crucified and He was taken down from the cross and laid in the arms of His Mother Mary. Finally Joseph of Aramathea donated his own grave site for Jesus to be laid in for burial.

All of these things happened 2000 years ago but they seem so real today. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, it was evil for them to defy their creator, and when The Chief Priests demanded that Jesus be crucified, it seemed to me to be much worse because it was not just disobedience of God's law, but it was personally attacking God himself in the person of Jesus, God's Son, who is God in person. But even then Jesus said, from the cross, *"forgive them for they don't know what they are doing."*

Sister told us that when Jesus died on the cross, He rose up from the dead on the 3rd day, so He was not dead any more. Before He rose from the dead, however He visited all of the people who had died since Adam and Eve's time. Those who loved God and always tried to do good and help other people when they were alive on earth were waiting at the gates of Heaven and when Jesus visited them, He threw open the gates and welcomed them into heaven to live forever with God. Now we are all able to live in heaven when it is our time too. How kind and generous Jesus is when he is willing to share his home with us all forever.

There is one condition that we need to meet in order to live with Jesus in heaven. We must acknowledge our failures, that is our sins. We must be sorry for them and ask God to forgive us. I have always known in my heart when I've done something wrong and when Sister taught us the 10 Commandments of God, those feelings were confirmed. I remembered, these rules are God's wish for us and I hoped they would be our wish for each other.

We now learned about our opportunity to ask God to help us and seek

his forgiveness for those times that we failed to live by His wishes. We learned about Confession. Today we call it the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



In the basement of the church there were little rooms where a person could meet with God through a priest and ask Him to forgive us for our sins.

(Confessionals) The rooms were divided into three parts. In the center was a place where the priest sat. It was separated by walls with sliding windows and mesh screens covering them. In place of doors to the room, there were heavy red velvet draperies covering the doorways. When you entered the room through the red velvet draperies, there was a

place to kneel down in front of the small window, through which you could talk with the priest.

We had already learned the 10 Commandments and now sister was telling us what they mean in our lives. I knew that it was wrong to disobey my parents, because I wanted to always make them happy. Sister told us why it was important to always respect and honor God, because it was He who made us all and He wanted us all to be his children whom He loves. If we said bad things about God it was very bad, and, if we said bad things about other people it was bad too, because we are all God's children.

Taking other children's things without permission, was stealing and God was very upset about that. If we told God that we were sorry, He would forgive us and everything would be OK. I wanted very much to tell God that I was sorry for all the bad things that I had done. Sister told us that when we went into the confessional and told the priest (*who was there to represent God because we couldn't see God's spirit*) the priest would tell us of God's forgiveness and he would say: “I absolve you in the Name of The Father and of The Son and of The Holy Spirit”, and we would know that God had heard and forgiven us. It wasn't difficult because sister gave us an example of how we should talk to the priest in the confessional. It was called *The Form Of Confession*. When we used this example, we couldn't go wrong. 1st – we ask the priest's blessing, 2nd – we tell him who we have offended, *God Himself*, 3rd – tell the priest how long it has been since our last confession, in this case, *My 1st Confession, (now I had to tell the priest my sins, Of course my greatest sin was disobedience to my parents and next was fighting with my brother.)*. Their must have been more because that 2 minutes seemed like an eternity to my 7 year old mind. When I was done, it

felt like I was walking on air, or possibly flying. It was wonderful and exhilarating to know that God had forgiven me for all that I had done wrong. Now I would be able to approach Him with a clean heart and soul for my First Communion. I have never forgotten that feeling and find it fleeting each time I have returned to confession.

Our lessons weren't done yet. Learning how to behave in church was always a challenge. I always wanted to make God happy but, getting along with all the other children was difficult to say the least. We were a rambunctious bunch. The look that sister gave us was usually enough to bring calm back into our ranks, but when I got home, it was usually pepper on my outstretched tongue. That punishment was usually reserved for talking in church and made an immediate impression on the need to control my speech. Walking with God was not always easy when there were so many distractions to take interest in.

It was getting closer to the time when we would receive our First Holy Communion. Jesus would actually come into us through the small consecrated bread at Mass. I had learned that when the priest said "This is My Body", it was actually Jesus Christ who became present and formulated those words from the priest. Yes it is Jesus who then becomes present to all of us and makes himself the bread offered by the spriest. When we receive it we actually eat the body of Jesus Christ himself. This was a little too much for a 7 year old to grasp but I believed that is what actually happened at Communion time.



I arrived early with my family that Sunday and all of the children in the first communion class gathered at the parish school. The girls in one group and the boys in the other. With Sister, our teacher, we all processed to the church and took our places in the front pews. The girls on the left (Mary's) side and the boys on the right (St. Joseph's) side.

The announcement bell rang, the altar boys with the priest entered from the left side of the sanctuary and The Mass began. It must be noted that this was 1943 and the Tridentine Liturgy was prominent as the universal liturgy of the Church. "*In nómine Patris*", We all blessed ourselves with The Sign Of The Cross. We a had our St. Joseph Sunday Missal with English translation so we could all follow the Mass. After the

sign of the cross there was “*Introibo ad altare Dei.*” I will go to the altar of God, to God who gives joy to my youth. I knew that it was the priest who was saying it but I always felt that I should express it too. The prayers of the priest continued in Latin and the altar boys responded, also in Latin,

Finally we heard “*Confiteor Deo*”...when we all publicly expressed that we were sinners. At one point, as we followed the Latin in our English missal, we said , *through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault*, and I knew that it meant me personally. I also knew that God had forgiven me when I went to confession. Still we were taught to strike our breast three times in recognition of the scourging that Jesus suffered for our sins.

There were many other physical symbols performed to acknowledge our reverence to God. When entering church, there was a Holy Water Font that we dipped our fingers into and then made the sign of the cross with the holy water in recognition of our Baptism and an expression of the desire that God would wash us clean of our faults as we entered His House. Then as we approached our seats, we genuflected on our right knee before God who is present in the tabernacle in recognition of His Kingship and prominence as our creator. Whenever we said or heard the name of Jesus, we bowed our heads in reverence, because as it says in the bible, “Every knee shall bend and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and the Son of God.” I knew that it was all important in God's eyes because everyone observed these holy traditions

The Mass continued. The priest was now in his pulpit reading the letters that the apostles had written to the church in olden times. The letters were called Epistles and after he had read them in Latin at the altar he now read them in English so all the people could understand them. They did not seem very interesting to me at the time and I tended to become very fidgety in my seat and that was not acceptable to Sister who would admonish me to be still. Then I would hear, “*At that time*”- - - and the priest was now proclaiming the Gospel. I liked that more because it was always the stories about what Jesus was doing, especially all of His miracles.

When it came time for the consecration, I was excited. Jesus was actually going to be present on the altar. I knew that I would not be able to see Him in His body but I would be able to see him in the Eucharistic Host. After the priest said the words of consecration (The words Jesus said at the Last Supper before He died for our sins) the priest raised the Host, I could actually see Jesus face in the bread that had become The Body Of Christ. It

was amazing. Then came the time for all of us first communicants to receive Him, body, blood, soul, and divinity. We approached the altar rail, knelt down and as the priest approached we could hear him say “*Corpus Christi*”, The Body of Christ. It was then that God touched me again. It wasn't like the blind man who could see, or the paralyzed man who could walk, but to me, it was like walking on air after my first confession. I thanked Jesus so much for that and feel embarrassed to say that I have not thanked Him every day since.

After Communion time, there was a special presentation by the priest for all of the new First Communicants. The priest told us the story of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. She is Mary, the Mother of God and appeared at a place in the Holy Land called Mt. Carmel to a monk whose name was Dominic. She gave him a scapular, which is the representation of the habit worn by those monks consecrated to Mary. She told him that those who wore the scapular would be her friends, and friends of God, and would not die without the Grace of God. They also must pray her Rosary for the salvation of sinners throughout the world. Then the priest gave us all a miniature scapular with a picture of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel so that we could always follow St. Dominic in His love for Jesus and His Mother Mary. I wore mine until it was worn out. My Father then replaced it with a silver medal of the scapular so that it would not wear out so easily.

Now it was time to put into practice what I had learned about God. At home I said my prayers every night and we had a statue of Our Lady of the Rosary and St. Therese the Little Flower flanking a Crucifix that portrayed Jesus crucifixion on Calvary. It was a reminder of God and His family in Heaven that I wanted to be a part of. It was on the bureau where we kept our clothes in our bedroom. It would remind us every day of the reality of Jesus life on earth and what He had done for us. There was a large picture of The Sacred Heart of Jesus on the wall, that I would later learn, showed the extreme anguish and sorrow of Jesus for His unconditional love for us, and what He suffered for all the sinners of the world. During the month of May we would decorate the top of the dresser with blue and white crape paper to honor Mary, Jesus Mother and therefore the Mother of God. On the cross, at His crucifixion, Jesus gave His mother to us so that she can be our spiritual mother in heaven. As a 7 year old, I thought that was all there was to my spiritual life. I had a lot to learn, but at the time, I thought I was done.

NOTES

From the Future

***At 7 years old, who could imagine life at 86?
Even being a teenager was impossible to grasp.
You would think, that with age would come
wisdom. Wisdom to improve my life with God
and His creation? It seems that my wisdom
only shows me how inadequate my life has
been, if it's purpose has really been to achieve
happiness with God forever in Heaven. How
can that be? Humanity has spent it's time
doing it's own thing. We have adopted the
phrase from Burger King; 'You can have it your
way'. How about God's way? We spend our
lives making our world into an expression of our
own self interest. I suppose we are basically,
still 7 years old!***