

THE HIGH PLAINS PREACHER

Welcome to the High Plains Preacher, stories about the Bible, high wind, fast horses, lack of moisture and other elements of life in the Texas Panhandle.

Grandparents Day

by Fr. Jim Schmitmeyer

Most elementary schools host a Grandparents Day each year. And so does your parish church. It occurs each year on July 26th, the feast day of St. Joachim and St. Anne, the parents of the Virgin Mary and the grandparents of the Lord Jesus.

We don't know many facts about Jesus' grandparents. We don't know what Joachim did for a living. We don't know how many children were born to St. Anne. We don't know what town they lived in. We just presume they existed because Jesus had to have grandparents, right? So, pious tradition has handed down two names, Joachim and Anne. And that's about all we can say about them.

So, why bring them up?

Well, for the same reason we bring up the life, the teaching and witness of any saint: to help us better know Christ, the Son of God and the Saviour of the World.

When it comes to Sts. Joachim and Anne, we might not know much by way of historical facts, but a recent article by Fr. Steve Grunow recently raised some interesting insights into the relationship between Jesus and his grandparents. For instance, did the boy Jesus ever help his grandfather, Joachim, out of bed and led him to rest in the shade of a tree on a summer day? Did he rub his grandmother's gnarled and calloused hands? Did he beg from them, as children do, stories about the good ol' days? More importantly, did he see in their weathered faces how fleeting, fragile and wonderful life in this world truly is? Were their deaths the first deaths that touched him deeply?

It's no secret that the Bible leaves out a lot of details, especially when it comes to the early part of Jesus' life known as "the hidden years." But that doesn't stop us from imagining such things as the flowers on the windowsill of Mary's kitchen or the warmth of Joseph's hand on the boy's shoulder the day he taught him how to build a chair.

Ever think about how God uses grandparents today as channels of his grace? No doubt, some of that grace echoes in a loud cheer at in a school gymnasium when a grandson makes a half-court shot or a granddaughter sinks the free-throw that wins the game.

This is the benefit we Catholics enjoy when we cultivate relationships with saints like Joachim and Anne. Their stories draw attention to the love of Christ hidden within the tender, everyday moments of life on earth. We then raise our eyes to the life of heaven where, someday, we hope to find ourselves at home in the House of God and the eternal love of the Trinity.