

God's Story

by Fr. Jim Schmitmeyer

“Tell me about yourself.”

How would you respond to that question? If you're a teenager, young adult or even middle age, you'll tend to say, “I'm a student.” Or “I'm an athlete.” Or “I'm a carpenter; a teacher; a dentist.”

But if you ask someone who is retired, you'll receive a different type of response. Chances are, they'll respond with a story: “Who am I? Well, let me tell you, my parents came from Mexico.” Or, “My grandparents emigrated from Germany.” Or, “I come from a family of blue collar workers.”

The retired person will pause, look off in the distance, and continue with a far-off voice. “I grew up in Oklahoma. Was baptized at St. Patrick's and graduated from Ardmore High School. Then I got married. Joe lost his arm in the oil field. We lived in a yellow house on the edge of town. Twelve years ago, my oldest died in auto accident and I grieve for her to this day. And this, my friend, is who I am.”

You hear the difference. One person identifies with their work. The other person identifies with their history.

What, sort of story is shaping your life? Who are the villains? The heroes? You know, we can't live a good life without a good story. Without God's story of Salvation to save us, we have only the story of sin to destroy us.

One reason it is a grave sin to miss Sunday Mass is that, in doing so, we abandon the role that we've been given to play in the Great Story of God. But this abandonment is more than simply walking off stage. Our absence from the on-going drama of redemption robs our lives of ultimate meaning, deadens the spirit of the parish community and affects the public witness of the Church. The end result of rejecting our role in the Great Story of God means that other stories—dark and misleading—fill the emptiness left behind.

Each Sunday, the Book is opened and the Table is set and the Great Story of God is told yet again. This story tells us who we are. This story, and this story alone, provides the world the truth that it seeks and the hope for which it desperately longs.

