

"Another Time, Another Place."

January 18, 2004



The article was fairly short (32 lines to be exact) as far as obituaries are concerned. The "tag line" under her name read "93; worked for John Hancock Insurance." She died in a local nursing home and was a member of my church long before I ever arrived at it. Frankly, most of the folks in my church had never heard of her ... she had stopped coming due to health issues several years ago.

I looked again and saw my name, "A funeral service was held on Jan. 12 at the George F. Doherty & Sons Funeral home, Wellesley, with the Rev. Kevin B. Crispell of the Wellesley Baptist Church officiating." I thought, isn't it interesting that the only time I'm referred to as Rev. is in wedding and obituary notices ... otherwise, it's always "Pastor." What is it about death that makes me so officious sounding?

But I wanted this Wellesley Way to be about Gladys Geiger. Gladys and her surviving sister Helen lived on the same quiet side street in Wellesley for 51 years! Although neither married, they became the unofficial parents and grandparents of countless children who grew up on that same quiet side street. At the funeral, countless stories were told by their neighbors of loving and simple acts of kindness that Gladys and her sister Helen did for the children and for their parents. "Their door was always unlocked and their back gate always open ... cookies were always on hand and they always had time for a story or two."

As I delivered the homily, I told the mourners that "Thomas Road, and specifically, the Geiger sisters, reminded me a lot of a simpler day and time ... a time, much like the TV series *The Andy Griffith Show* ... where, just like in *Mayberry*, everyone knew their neighbors and looked out for them." Nowadays, that's simply not true. Most folks don't even know the *name* of their neighbors, never mind inviting them in or looking out after them.

So maybe I took that group of mourners down memory lane ... back to a time and a place that doesn't exist anymore. But I think we are all the worse for it. Jesus said, "Love your neighbor as yourself ..."

Gladys certainly did that - and great will be her reward in Heaven!