

I had this great idea to open up this part of the service to the congregation and let people tell their favorite stories of stupid things Mark ^{Henry} has done in his life. Help those who don't know how well. But there really isn't enough time; there's another Mass starting here in about 12 hours. And if we get Mark's father started, nobody else would get a turn. Except for one person, and that's Mark. Just when you think you're exhausted the stories, Mark will never hesitate to tell one more on himself.

So we won't do that. We won't tell a lot of stories to embarrass Mark. Instead, I'll just tell one.

This story is about a souvenir in France. It takes place in the spring of 1985, an ocean away from the opening of a baseball season in which Kansas City and St. Louis were destined to have their first important meeting of the decade. That spring Mark and I took two friends and a rented car to the French countryside. It was a marvelous trip - beautiful scenery, wonderful company. We all picked up souvenirs along the way, but Mark found one that was very special to him, a statue of Bernard of Clairvaux. It was a little pricey, but he bought it for his Uncle Gary. Incidentally, Gary offered a moving treat for this couple last evening. He quoted Van Gogh, whom Mark confused with Van Halen.

Shortly after the trip to France we returned to Rome and I went with Mark to the train station to say goodbye. He was carrying more luggage than a ~~Polish~~ ^{Viennese} family of six. Most of it was souvenirs for his family and friends, a measure of the size of his heart. "I want you to meet someone," he said to me. His friends from the University of Dallas were spilling into the station. "Paul," he said, "this is Michelle."

When he got home, Mark unpacked his luggage - and this is the stupid thing that he did - He was missing one souvenir, the one he loved the most, the statue of Bernard of Clairvaux.

But, as the months went by, Mark unpacked his heart - and this was the wisest thing he did. He found there another souvenir, the one he loved the most, Michelle Rejean.

We lose things, we find things, by accident, by choice, and step by step we come to know just what the heart does seek.

Jesus says if you are poor, if you are sorrowful, if you are persecuted - if you have lost everything, you are still blessed if you find the Kingdom of God within you.

Michelle and Mark, ~~you~~ to be honest, you lose a lot today. You lose some independence, you lose the way you used to relate to other people. But what you find is someone who loves you, someone who loves you, and that is far more precious*. ^{out of that love,} everything will _{be new.}

Today, Kansas City and St. Louis have their second most important meeting of the decade. From this meeting springs blessedness, in which we all find Christ.

^{True} Love ~~that~~ endures as the glory of Rome, ~~as~~ the splendor of Vienna

wedding of Mark & Michelle Avery
June 16, 1989