

Funeral Homily for Thomas R. Fabietti, C.P.A.
My Best Friend
April 15, 1994

How does one preach at the funeral of your best friend? I'm not sure, so please grant me your indulgence if I falter.

There are thousands of millions of thoughts that run through my mind and I'm sure through yours as well. And I fear that this homily might be longer than Tom would like and the reason I say that is because in Tom's "no-holds barred" way of presenting the truth, Tom would always tell me that the reason my homilies are good is because they are short. We could talk his love for the Villanova Wildcats or the Dallas Cowboys or the New York Yankees or Peter Gabriel or even how he hated the St. Joes Hawks or seafood and for anybody to mess with his hair; but there are certain images of Tom that will perdure in our minds long after this day. For me they are best captured by the following portraits: Tom the Hermit, Tom the Accountant and Tom the Logician.

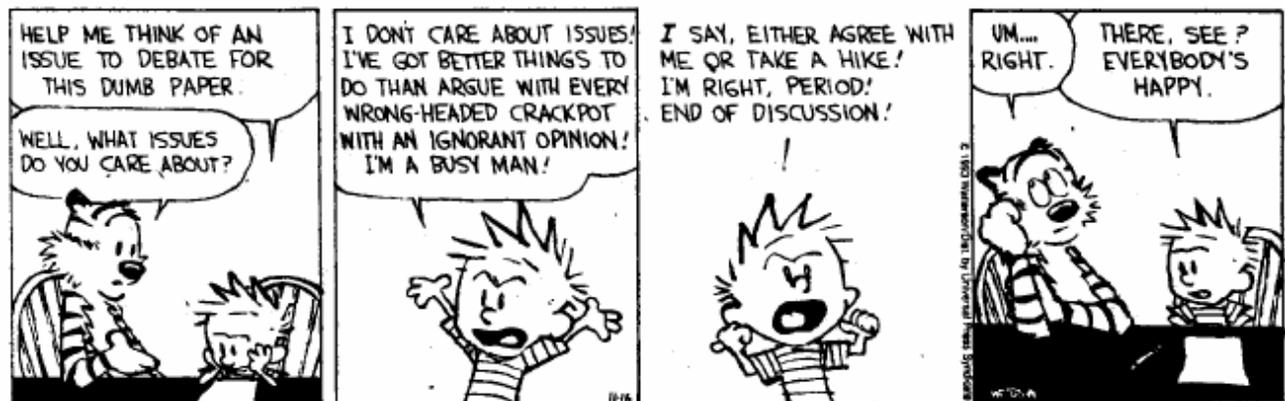
The mascot of St. Augustine Prep is the Hermit. There was no one who lived it better than Tom Fabietti. He ran Cross Country, played Basketball, and played Baseball for our school. He was a good athlete (he even looked like Jeff Hostettler!) and was an excellent student as well. But it was not only in those externals that he embodied what he learned. He was even a hermit in his heart and in his lifestyle. All of his closest friends were from the Prep, whether they were from his class, his teachers or members of our birthday club, the Saggiarrians. Tom had engrossed himself in the fraternity that only a Hermit can appreciate. He loved to sleep and to eat like a hermit. His apartment in Pleasantville was the closest that many of us will ever come to a cave – he loved dark and cold spaces. Yes, Tom was a Hermit in heart and mind and soul. Yet, to be a Hermit at St. Augustine Prep also means to be a Christian Gentleman and that might be the far better description of who Tom really was. You see, Tom was the world's greatest advocate of Catholic education. He knew what it had done for him and wanted to see that in others. For Tom, being a Christian Gentleman meant telling the truth no matter what the cost, no matter what others might think. He always respected others. His faith was important to him. He would even interrupt his sleep on Sunday mornings to go to Church! In fact, the reason that we are here in this Church of St. Isidore is because it was here that Tom served the altar faithfully all through his grade school days. When he was in high school he used to come to daily Mass here during Lent and Advent and be a Lector at the Masses. God was one of Tom's best friends. If he didn't understand why things happened the way they did, he would say, "I believe in God and he must know what he's doing." We must echo those same words now.

Tom the Accountant was the consummate professional. Jim Hammerstedt, another of his best friends, noted that it is with a little bit of irony that today's date is the last filing date for income taxes – sort of Tom's last thumbing of his nose at the IRS. Tom was a wealth of knowledge about stocks and mutual funds. He prided himself on his investments (even though he did buy IBM stock while it was still on the slide). He participated in a mutual fund which only invested in companies that worked for peace and justice. He admitted it was low on return but it gave him peace of mind. It was his way of helping out. His constant advice was to think of the long term. And that he did. He lived what he professed and it reflected in the loving investment he made in his family and friends and the spiritual investment he made in his soul. He kept himself right with God and His creation. In the coming weeks he was to be a Confirmation sponsor for Frank Guarancini and the best man for Jim Hammerstedt. He felt greatly honored by both these privileges. He was admired by others because he was sincere. The bottom line for Tom was not money, but value. And there was nothing more that he valued than his family. His mother Joanne was his protectress and

greatest advocate; his father Auggie was his chief model and confidant; and his brother Steve was the source of his greatest boasting – he took more pride in Steve’s accomplishments than his own (probably because he felt he taught Steve everything he knows). He developed and professed a profound “theology of accounting” one from which all of us could learn a great lesson.

There is a course that many of us have been educated in and yet it was not in any high school or college curriculum. That course was given at the university of hard knocks and was developed and taught by Professor Tom Fabietti. We, his family and friends, called it “Tom Logic.” Everybody else’s world view and “Tom Logic” were not necessarily identical. One of his famous “Tomisms” is that “White chocolate is not chocolate.” Or there is the time that a group of students were travelling together and in Tom’s room the alarm clock went off at 4:30 AM and when asked why, his response was, “I wanted to know what time it was.” Understanding that one might take another couple lifetimes. Another bit of “Tom Logic” is that if he really liked something he would never use it and in this way it would stay new forever. There is a favorite cartoon of Tom’s that spells out well what “Tom Logic” is all about. He kept this by his phone in the apartment. (**Read comic.**)

CALVIN AND HOBBES



One of the great aspects of “Tom Logic” is the ability to laugh at yourself. Some said Tom had a black and white world view. We never knew if that was because he was extremely color-blind or because he had a great sense of right and wrong. For whatever reason Tom knew one major truth in his system of logic and that was the importance of family life and the home. He was a “homebody.” There was no place that he was more comfortable than at his house on Riviera Boulevard. Whether it was watching NCAA March Madness or 300 channels at once (Tom was merciless with the remote control!) or sitting eating gnocchi on his birthday – Joanne made them perfect this year – or finally setting his dad straight this past Christmas on how to make those pizelles perfectly; for Tom, there was no place like home. And so if we really think about it, maybe “Tom Logic” isn’t so strange at all. In fact, I believe that “Tom Logic” is probably much closer to “God Logic” than any other form of logic. You see, just as we might challenge Tom’s conclusions from time to time, so we might take God to task for His: “Why this tragic death?” “Why so young?” “Why did it have to be our son, our brother, our best friend?” If we use our common logic to answer this question, I think we will fail; but if we begin to delve into God’s mind I think we might be shamed to see that God now offers Tom a better place – one of fullness of peace, fullness of love and fullness of life. I believe that “God Logic” and “Tom Logic” are much better than our own.

Let me conclude with two quotes from St. Augustine, someone who Tom came to love and admire. In these passages, Augustine reflects on the death of his best friend.

The comfort I had in my friend
and the pleasure I had with him in things of earth
did much to repair and remake me.
All kinds of things rejoiced my soul in his company --
to talk and laugh and do each other kindnesses,
read pleasant books together,
pass from lightest jesting to talk of the deepest things
and back again;
to differ without rancour, as a man might differ with himself,
and when most rarely dissention arose
find our normal agreement all the sweeter for it;
teach each other to learn from each other;
be impatient for the return of the absent,
and welcome them with joy on their homecoming;
these and such like things,
proceeding from our hearts
as we gave affection and received it back,
and shown by face, by voice, by the eyes,
and a thousand other pleasing ways,
kindled a flame which fused our souls
and of the two made us one.

Well has someone said of his friend that he is half his soul.
For I thought that my soul and his soul
were but one soul living in two bodies.
If you find pleasure in someone's soul, let it be loved in God.
In themselves, souls are but shifting things;
In God they stand firm; else they would pass and perish.
In God, therefore let them be loved,
And so to God we should bring as many souls as we can.



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