

Jeff Around Town – June 24, 2025

**Jeff:** If you're on Facebook, how often have you had a memory pop up, an event of significance from a year ago, five years ago, ten years ago or more? It's a nice feature to have something to remind you of those important events and those people in your life. But what if you're not on Facebook or what about those special things that happened long before the internet? You know, it's not like Facebook can retroactively go back in time to remind you of something that happened 30, 40, 50 years or more ago. But who knows? Somebody will probably invent that thing, but I digress.

This is where those special people in our lives come in. Those who hold space for important events enter the picture. People like Judy Stoysich and J.R. Josso. If you recognize their names, maybe it's because you also went to St. Agnes Grade School in South Omaha. And if you don't know them, I hope you have a Judy or a J.R. in your life too. St. Agnes Church and School no longer exist, which makes the keeper of the memories even more important.

Where the church and school once stood on 23rd and Q Streets, there's now a nice modern apartment building and a nice parking lot. It was in that parking lot where recently some of the graduating class of the 8th grade gathered 50 years after the fact. There was the heartbreaking story of the murder of the parish priest, Father Clefman. When that had happened, I had already joined the World Herald as a cartoonist and had drawn a tribute cartoon to Father Clefman, which was heartbreaking and surreal.

There was also the visiting priest from Creighton University, Father John Scott, the Jesuit professor of physics, who once held up a large poster of Saturn during his Sunday homily, you know, to express how the solar system is an example of the wonders of the Creator. Even Gustav Holst would have been blown away.

St. Agnes was only a five-minute walk from Our Lady of Guadalupe, but O.L.G., as we called it, didn't have its own school. So, all the kids from O.L.G. came to St. Agnes, which was all well and good, except that both parishes maintained their own sports teams, sports teams that played in the same Catholic Youth Organization League. When it came to baseball and basketball, more often than not, it was O.L.G. who came out on the winning side, which made coming to school on Monday morning a little humiliating if you were a kid from St. Agnes, as I was.

And yet any teasing was always good-natured. Indeed, I really didn't think about the fact that some of the kids in my class attended a different church. And what's more, my mom made sure that I experienced not just confession at St. Agnes, but at Our Lady of Guadalupe as well.

It really did feel like one big community, and it was good for me. Me, I grew up in a family completely of Czech ancestry, and as a little kid, did I ever have a taco or a burrito? Nope. It was thanks to the incredible lunch ladies at St. Agnes that I had my first enchilada. It was amazing, and I was hooked. After that, I'd ask my mom to make tacos, which she happily did. But back to the reunion.

Imagine seeing most of your friends from 50 years ago there in a parking lot of a church and school that no longer exists. All those memories and stories of teachers we adored, and maybe a few we didn't but still respected. All those stories of our classmates, some

heartbreaking, but mostly funny. Some really funny, but maybe not so suitable for this platform. All thanks, not to social media, but rather old-school connections like Judy and J.R. who, through five decades, have made it a priority to keep in touch. May you be so fortunate.

And that's another Jeff Around Town.