

As promised a couple of weeks ago – a story for the young church today. I thought it would be a good idea to break up the five weeks of reading John’s Gospel with a story this week.

I thought for sure I could find something appropriate in my library of children’s books – but found nothing. So, not wanting to disappoint anyone – I wrote this story for today:

Eight year old Noah loved the summers. Some of his favorite activities took place in June, July, and August:

Baseball.

Swimming.

Bike Riding.

Camping.

Chasing after the ice cream truck.

Eating watermelon.

And of course, NO SCHOOL!

One of the things Noah looked forward to most of all, though, was the two weeks he got to spend with his grandma.

Nonna Marie lived in a big old house out in the country – with a big front porch, creaky stairs and lots of big shade trees around it.

She grew lots of vegetables in the garden, gathered eggs each morning from her own chickens, cooked fabulous meals – and of course let Noah stay up much later at night than his parents ever did --- but don’t you know the best lightening bugs are caught well after ten o’clock at night?

One of the things Noah loved about his Nonna is that she seemed to have a saying for everything that happened or for whatever someone was supposed to do.

Noah’s mom said this is because Nonna had lived for so long – she just had all this wisdom she had to share! *Nonna’s nicities* – are what Noah liked to call them:

“Make today an adventure” Nonna would say every morning, “or else you will have a very dull day.”

“Animals are like angels sent to earth to teach us how to love,” she would say as old Brownie, Nonna’s collie dog, would give Noah a good lick on the face.

Or: “No person in the world ever lost anything by being nice,” she would say as she held the door open for someone at the store.

Many of Nonna’s nicities, Noah noticed, had to do with food – especially when Noah got a little picky about what he ate:

“Drink your milk so you will have strong bones and teeth,” Nonna would say.

“Vegetables make you grow up to be big and strong” she would say as Noah pushed his peas around his plate.

“Eat your carrots, if you want to have good eyesight,” she would say.

Or: “We have to eat our fruits to keep us going – and to get us to go,” Nonna would say. Noah would always giggle a little about his one.

The highpoint of Noah’s visits with his grandma always came on Sunday – when they would get in Nonna’s big Buick, and drive very slowly and carefully to Nonna’s Church in town.

They always had to go early “to get a good seat” Nonna would say – but Noah knew it was so his grandma would have plenty of time for visiting.

And they always stayed late afterward to visit some more – but Noah also knew grandma wanted to show off her freshly painted nails as she passed out the bulletins.

Nonna seemed to know everyone – and everyone seemed to know Nonna – after all, she had been going to the same church practically all her life.

Even though Noah was eight years old, and had just made his First Communion – he had to admit he did not quite understand all there was to know about the Mass or about how the bread and wine became the Body and Blood of Christ – or what difference any of it made.

He was not surprised, that Nonna had a few sayings about these things, too. Like:

“Everything we have is a gift from God, and so we come to Mass as a way of saying thanks.”

Or: “We come to Mass to speak with our friends and neighbors – but mostly we come to speak to God.”

Or: “Sunday is a day of rest – and what better place to rest than in the arms of the Lord?”

Nonna Marie really had some good sayings about Communion. Like:

“If we work hard, we have to eat well. What a feast the Lord places before us.”

Or: “We become what we eat, Noah. So every time we go to Communion, we become a bit more like Jesus.”

Or: “Jesus loves us so much – he wants to be with us everywhere we go. That’s why he gives us his body and blood – so he becomes a part of us.”

Or: “Jesus, himself, told us: ‘I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever.’ That means one day you will get to see your grandpa Tony again in heaven” -- she would say, always while wiping a tear from her eye.

Now, every week, after Mass on Sunday, on their way home – Nonna would always stop her Buick outside of the bakery. And Nonna and Noah would go inside, and Noah could pick out any donut he wanted – one to eat on the way home, and one for later.

One day Noah asked his Nonna as they stopped – “If milk is good for my bones and teeth – what are donuts good for, Nonna?”

“Why,” Nonna said, “Donuts are good for nothing – except for turning a dull day ---- into an adventure.”

Every time we come here to receive the Eucharist – our dull days turn into an adventure – for what a feast the Lord sets before us on the altar! May we always hunger and thirst for the Eucharist that little by little – transforms us more and more to be like Jesus!