

Childhood Lessons on Doing God's Will

By, Madeleine L. Brouillard

As a child of the fifty's I was raised by strong women with strong consciences. My "Mémère" guided our household while my Mom and Dad worked. My memories of "Mem" consist of her taking us to visit friends and family members that had "needs". She always knew who would be "in need" and we'd go often to help with groceries and supplies. It was my job to help fold clothes, mostly diapers. My grandmother instilled in me and my brothers the need to help others and to do it with a smile on our faces. She knew that she was teaching us life lessons, although not set in a school, she was the first one to teach me what it meant to cheerfully do God's will. She called these visits her parish visits.

All those lessons were reinforced in the Catholic schools I attended from kindergarten through college. The Sisters of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, then the Daughters of the Holy Spirit helped me to become the person I am today.

When I had my own sons, I knew I wanted them to enjoy the same feelings of home, comfort and love that I derived from my childhood. My Mother helped me to raise my sons and helped me give them the same sense of caring I was given. To this day, we still do our "parish visits".

Today most children are not part of a multi generational family, living in the same house or even nearby. The need to fill in this gap is provided by our Catholic schools. Our students receive educations second to none but even more importantly, they are given the extra lessons of providing service to those in need. We teach care and compassion right along with reading and math. Catholic school children are different and it shows. They are visible in every town, in every church and often in positions of leadership. They know about service and the importance of what each one of us can offer others. They volunteer! It is what we do best.

Growing up I wanted to be a lawyer, but the good Sisters of Annhurst College felt that I was better suited to teaching. How right they were. I have enjoyed a very wonderful career in teaching. Although I taught for sixteen years in public schools to help put my sons through college, the rest was done in Catholic schools. On Monday, August 30, we began another year of school. I love this day as I look into the faces of students eager to begin school, excited to see all their friends again. How lucky and blessed are they that their parents want what is best for them and how blessed am I that I am here, in this place, at this time, to

watch them develop into people ready to volunteer and continue the tradition of “parish visits”.

Please help us to continue providing guidance to students that will lead them to develop character, compassion and the love of service. They are our future. They are the future of our Church. We ask not only for your financial generosity but for your prayers. Help us keep Catholic schools alive!

Mrs. Madeleine L. Brouillard, a cradle Catholic from Southbridge, MA, has been an educator for 40 years. She was a student of Notre Dame School from kindergarten to grade 12, attended Annhurst College and received her MA in Education from Worcester State College. She is currently a post graduate student at Anna Maria College She is a single mom, proud of the two sons she raised and an even prouder grandmother of three.

As a teacher, Mrs. Brouillard has taught first and third grades, English to 6th and 7th grade and high school French. She has tutored adults in both French and English. Since 1997 she has been the principal of Trinity Catholic Academy.