

Newly returned to attending services, though not regularly, I had a problem standing during coffee hour in Assisi Hall. I espied a friendly looking elderly lady sitting near the west entrance stairs and pulled up one of those sliding chairs and was fascinated to hear of her travels any Sunday I made my way up to church.

She was one of two people I canonized in my early years back at St Francis after about a thirty year lapse except for a few visits along with my parents and Fred and sometimes Alan, who lived in The City. I called her St Harriet of the Holy Welcome. I bring this up because I in turn get a kick out of talking with new people, although I of course enjoy the ones I have known for quite a while.

Which brings me to the time our beloved RevDeb, chaplain at hospitals and prison ministry leader was still a deacon. For some reason Cathy Ostuw RevDeb and I were standing outside the entranceway to the New Church (us old timers do call it that at least sometimes) and having discovered we had all been girl scouts, started singing the familiar "Make New Friends But Keep the Old, One is Silver and the Other Gold"

Now some of you may not realize that Fred and Alan are quite a bit older, because they don't really look it. My parents said they hadn't been sure where Fred would be living, but since he was doing well at I think it was the Devereaux schools of marvelous potentialities they decided to have another child. Too bad I ended up being a total brat but that is another story.

So when mom and dad died in a car crash the family was rather disarrayed. I can't think of a better word. I had just sold the last of my Mom's diamonds on the earlier advice of the late Jane Elicker of French Cuisine class fame and Shermy the Wagon was expiring of transmission failure at twenty eight years. (They don't make them like that with the large cargo area anymore)

So we were singing that song and I later that day went to the once a month healing service because we all had stuff in the house and needed to get along to sort it. Alan and Verne had bought Patzy Lavender's house, for which I canonized her because she had been urging me to get Alan to buy the house next door earlier in the year I think it was.

So spontaneously but maybe not legally RevDeb before I gave her that nickname at her ordination to the priesthood laid her hands on my head and blessed the desire to go through the stuff with my brothers and to enjoy the memories she added. St Francis people have blessed us and enabled us to enjoy our second childhood's together since we did not grow up together. Not the least were the parish suppers where as I told Mark's mother when she visited, the three of us often sat together and chatted about this and that while sampling this and that from the buffet table. In a possible pageant about Moses, as I have told many of you, we would be the locusts.

There is more than I could mention in a Reflection to thank St Francis people for but this is a start. At the start of Advent I think the thought of Holy Welcome to visitors at St

Francis is appropriate. Chuck, Adrian, Linda, Anne all joined a couple of years ago and are still here. Let's give everyone who visits a holy welcome. The rewards in fellowship and shared activities are endless. Amen.