

Stewardship

Sept 10 & 11, 2011

A Volleyball Match, a Pocket Knife and a T-shirt

In a few weeks St Es is having a couple initiatives for Joplin. A clothing drive that will be underwear specific is slated for Sunday, Oct 2. We are calling this "Undie Sunday". The other, on the following Saturday, Oct. 8, is a work day in Joplin. Right after mass I am presenting a 15-minute slide show about Joplin past and present and 3 organizations there, how they are rebuilding lives in that city and how we can help. It will be right here in the front of church. Please stay a bit and join me if you are curious.

Funny what leads a person to a particular stewardship, a particular effort. For some it is a family tragedy; for others an inspirational person; for others a literal dream. In my case it was a volleyball match, a pocketknife and a t-shirt.

My wife, Vicky, has always been the one to take our daughter, Keara, to her out-of-town volleyball tournaments. But this past March for a tournament in Joplin she couldn't – so I had to.

Volleyball tournaments can be mind-numbingly long and are always in small, cramped, sweaty gyms. I prefer the outdoors of softball. Anyway, between games to relieve the tedium I roamed around town a bit. After lunch at a great little hole-in-the-wall diner, Fred and Red's Chili House, I stopped in at Southtown Sporting Goods a local hunting and fishing store. I neither hunt nor fish and would rather be beaten than do either. But a couple weeks before that had lost my pocketknife and was feeling naked without it. Not wanting to go back to the volleyball tournament and not having anything better to do I stopped at Southtown to see what they had. I ended up buying this one.

Two months later Joplin is hit with the tornado

All summer long every time I felt that knife in my pocket I thought of Joplin and the store where I bought it. I intended to get down there to help in some way. But life happens and I never did make it down.

About a month ago, just before school started, I stumbled on the chance to help the Knights deliver the water, clothing, diapers and other stuff you all donated over the summer for Joplin. This was an odd Saturday when I didn't have anything going on so rode down with Justin Curry and Matt Scanlon to make the deliveries.

After dropping off 2 pallets of water at AmeriCorps we, of course, drove around the devastation area. WOW! We were amazed and impressed by what we saw. Matt took several pictures that are in the slide presentation.

After an hour driving around we delivered the clothing and other stuff to Misti's Mission. It's not so much the t-shirt that inspires me but Misti, the woman who wore it. Matt, Justin and I talked with her for 15 minutes or so. We found her to be an incredible lady. Talk about the power of one! Part of the slide presentation tells her story.

Five days after that, on a Thursday, Keara and I went back to Joplin to volunteer for the day. We ended up at a soup kitchen for volunteers but at the end of the day went to Misti's Mission to drop off a few clothes we had brought from home. Keara is 18 and did not particularly want to go that morning. She was blown away by Misti. On the drive back home she said "I'm really glad I went today". Hearing her say that made MY whole day.

So here I am with a little stewardship project and telling of my journey to it

Your stewardship journey may be similar but will surely be different. Just be open to where you buy your pocketknife.