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A FRANK DISCUSSION

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VICTORY'S MOST LONG-LIVED PARISHIONER, FRANK FRITSCH

Frank Fritsch is seen by many as the tall and distinguished-looking old man anchored like a predictable fixture in the front pew of every Saturday vigil Mass for what has now become decades. Where once Mrs. Rita Fritsch, Frank's beloved wife, sat at his arm now sits another Rita occupying the space left empty by the 2009 passing of her grandmother after whom she was named. Saturday after Saturday with a regularity that can only be described as "religious," young Rita and Mr. Francis Fritsch make their way dependably to the foot of Our Lady of Victory's altar. His hearing aids are not dependable, and I have heard him ask in a full tone that carries far, "Who is it that sitting in my spot?" People smile indulgently at the charming scene, Mass begins and ends, and off everyone goes after some parting good-byes and waves to fellow parishioners.



Endless generations of youth so often overlook the "elderly," dismissing them as sweet little old ladies or maybe cast them in the role of cranky curmudgeonly old men, often overlooked members of society who knit, complain about "kids these days" or maybe (if lucky) considered distinguished founts of elderly wisdom. Still they are cast in roles, roles lacking in subtlety with little attention paid to the complicated nature of the individual soul and set of experiences that have brought him or her thus far.

Youth is a gift we are all given to one extent or another and, as such, we have all been guilty of dismissing those whom have achieved great longevity as mere tropes or caricatures of what elderly means to us instead of looking carefully into the unique and wrinkled eyes and lives of the individuals in question. Frank Fritsch is a brilliant example of how such cursory and shallow stereotypes rob all of us of the rich human treasures which we constantly find ourselves surrounded.

(Continued on Page 6)

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

**THE KKK AND
CATHOLICISM
(PAGE 6)**

**STRENGTHENING YOUR
RESOLVE THIS LENT
(PAGE 9)**

**SCHOOL UPDATE
(PAGE 10-11)**

**NEW MOVIE NIGHT
(PAGE 11)**

**SCHOOL SURVEY
RESULTS
(PAGE 14-15)**