

Carlos Michael

2 4 6 8 Friday!

A monthly publication of Carlos Michael Communications Media.

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Welcome to **2 4 6 8 Friday** – a weekly podcast and monthly publication of Carlos Michael Communications Media.

Our mission is to plant seeds that motivate, educate, empower, and entertain. Our vision is to live in a world that thinks less of itself and more about its neighbors.

Think of **2 4 6 8 Friday** as an extension of what Carlos likes to call *the best virtual coffee shop in America (aka The Cup!)*.

This virtual medium provides a platform where we can gather as a group of friends at the local coffee shop talking about a variety of topics that only a small intimate circle of friends would be interested in talking or hearing about.

We look forward to sharing a cup of coffee with you.
“Let’s Coffee Break!”

--Carlos Michael Communications Media



Dear Friend:

Welcome to what I am calling the official *Carlos Michael journal, handbook, yearbook, and almanac*.

I use the word *official*, because it is me who is putting this project together.

Please keep in mind as you read the story of my 62-year life journey and everything contained therein (as of the date of this writing) February 2024, that *who* I am is not as important as *what* I have accomplished in the service of God through my neighbors.

While it is true is that I have made a great many mistakes and poor decisions over my lifetime, let it be known that all I ever wanted in life was to know, love, and serve God, by knowing, loving, and serving my neighbor.

I didn't know that way back when, but I do now.

I know this to be true because I remember myself as a child at three years old in the backyard of the house on Francisquito Avenue (1964), laying on my back looking toward the sky, smiling, because in that moment I fell deeply in love with God through His creation.

In that moment I knew down to the deepest part of my soul (as young as I was), that what I wanted in life was to love and serve God. Nothing else mattered.

Then it came—the storm of storms that would toss me about from one setback after another but never from the love the Father has for me and the love, I have for Him in response to His love for me.

Welcome to my life (such as it is).

--CM





Journal / Handbook / Yearbook / Almanac

To better understand this book, let us understand the meaning of what a journal, handbook, yearbook, and almanac are. According to Google, 2024:

A **personal journal**, also known as a diary, is a private place to record your thoughts, feelings, experiences, and observations. You can use it for self-reflection, goal setting, creative expression, or documentation of life events.

At its core, that is what this 2468 Friday publication is going to be: a public record of my thoughts, feelings, experiences, and observations.

However, it will also function as a handbook, yearbook, and almanac.

A **handbook** is a guide or list of instructions on one subject. In the case of this handbook, Carlos Michael is the subject. This handbook will introduce you to the Carlos Michael culture, mission, and values serving also a means of communication.

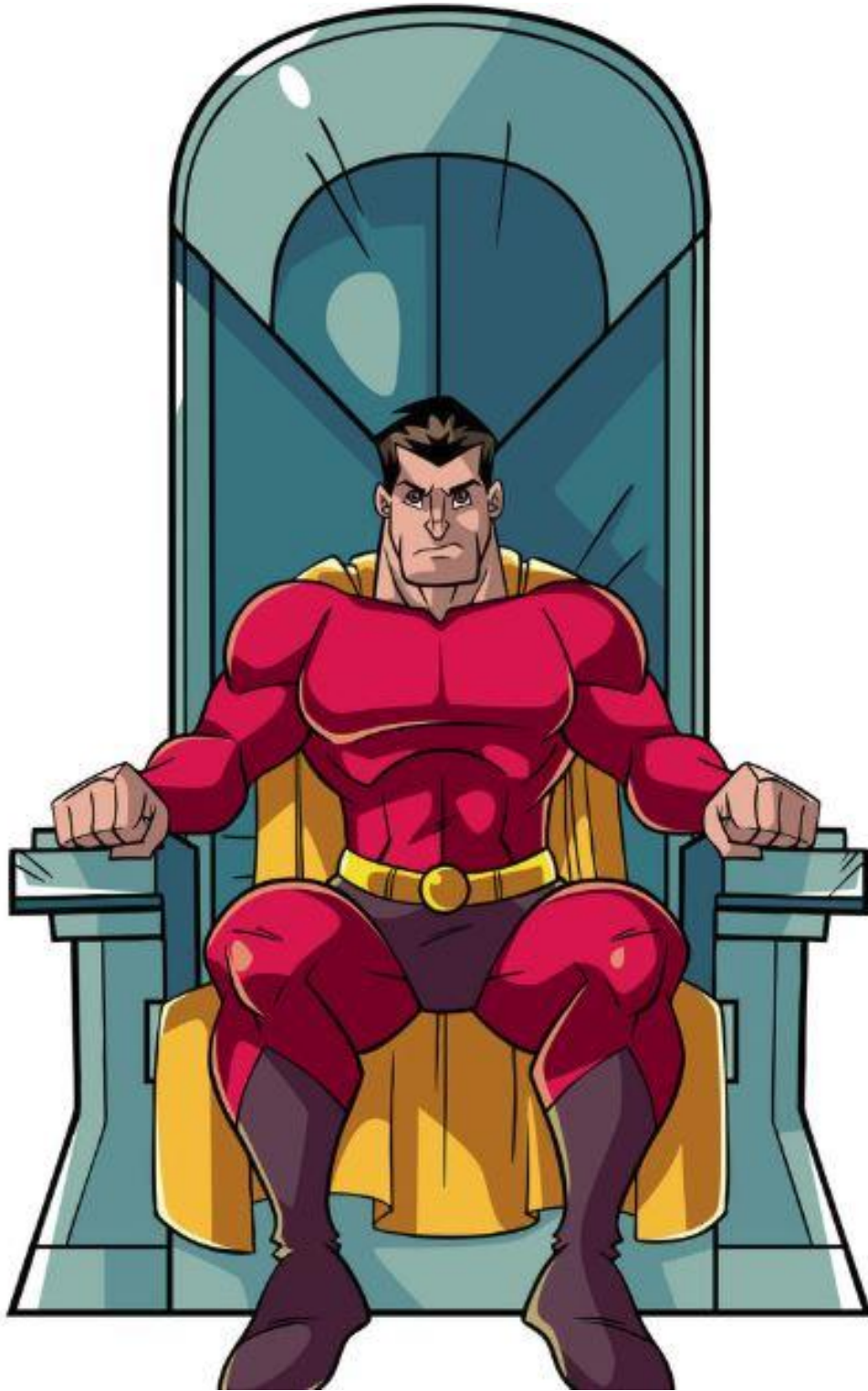
A **yearbook**, also known as an annual, is a type of book that is published annually that is used to record, highlight, and commemorate the past year of a school. If it helps, think of this yearbook as part of (CMU) Carlos Michael University.

An **almanac** is a book or table that contains information about the coming year, which includes a calendar, astronomical phenomena, and other data. In this case, all the data is based on the life journey of Carlos Michael Padilla.

My hope is that you will find this book *motivating, inspiring, educational, empowering, and entertaining.*

--CM

WELCOME



Mexican I Am. Mexican I Will Be.

Recently, the clan and I have been watching faith-based sports and other movies on Amazon. What a joy it has been to watch these films, mainly due to the courage of the folks behind the making of these films, and perhaps the actors as well, who, through these films, are showing the audience that a) God is NOT dead, b) faith and prayer do matter, and c) when any group, team, or community come together as “we” instead of “me,” there is no telling how much can be accomplished.

Of all the films we watched, two touched my heart in a special way. These two films gave me hope, opened my eyes, and helped to bring closure and a certain amount of pride (with humility) to a heritage I once was ashamed to admit that I had been born into.

The two films I am referring to are: **The Perfect Game** (2009), and **Spare Parts** (2015).

*The former, **The Perfect Game** (2009), is about an impoverished ragtag group of boys from Monterrey, Mexico, who discover the joys of sandlot baseball, thanks to the guidance of a coach (Clifton Collins Jr.) who had once hoped to make it in the major leagues. Armed with a dream of playing in the Little League, the boys defy the odds, setting off on an unprecedented winning streak that leads them across the border to America and the 1957 Little League World Series. (Google, 2024).*

Can you imagine being a group of boys from Mexico coming into 1957 America that looked nothing like America does today? Um, well, okay, maybe that wasn't exactly a great analogy. Still, think about it. You're a young Mexican boy who probably heard stories about how wonderful life is in America in contrast to the poverty and hardship of Mexico. You believe the streets are paved with gold in the land of plenty. Everyone is nice to each other, and you are free to come and go as you please.

That's the fabled version of America. Much like what I believed about Americans who lived in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and other states of the heartland [as a boy] where cowboys and cows were synonymous with dust and prairies in contrast to southern California.

In my day, where I grew up, we believed, or at least I believed, *which incidentally was based on naivete and listening to the wrong people*, that people in this part of the country lived as hillbillies: bare feet, a wheat shaft in their mouth, overalls, and poverty.

Thank the good Lord about that fallacy, meaning, that way of thinking was every which way, wrong and I for one am glad to say that 'I stand corrected!'

Imagine what those young boys saw and heard during the course of their run to the Little League World Series – Whites only signs, segregation, being called “wetbacks” and white Americans, albeit, not all white Americans mind you, who spoke the word “Mexican” as if it were a derogatory word or meant something dirty.

I am reminded of the elderly man at the local supermarket when I was 9 years old in 1970--*13 years after the events in the film took place*--who said to me, **“YOU Mexicans are nothing but dirty people!”**

That comment screwed up my way of thinking about being Mexican/Hispanic for over 30 years. But this isn't about me.

I am certain that was nothing compared to what the boys of Monterrey, Mexico heard during their run in 1957 America.

However, racism and ignorance is not the main reason for mentioning these movies. In the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, *“We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the*

worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies.”

Touche, Dr. King!

*The film, *Spare Parts* (2015), also based on a true story, is about four Hispanic students from a high school in Arizona that is comprised mainly of Hispanic students, who with the help of the school’s newest teacher, form a robotics club. Although they have no experience, the youths set their sights on a national robotics contest. With \$800 and parts scavenged from old cars, they build a robot and compete against reigning champion MIT. Along the way, the students not only learn how to build a robot, but something far more important: how to forge bonds of friendship that will last a lifetime. (Google 2024).*

Several takeaways occurred to me while watching these films.

1 With respect to my past, both that old man and my cousin were wrong! I am NOT a dirty Mexican, and, people like us CAN become doctors and more.

2 Be not ashamed of our heritage. Instead, embrace it!

3 We, as Mexicans are more than just a poverty clad man propped up against a cactus taking a siesta underneath the canopy of his sombrero, or a cartoon character named the “Frito Bandito” who does his part to push his tasty chips not necessarily to Hispanics, but white America—at least that was the case in the past. These two images do not represent or reflect who we are as a people.

Wow, I cannot believe I am saying [now] what I never would have admitted previously. Dad would be proud, that much is true.

4 If four Mexican students can build an \$800 robot and beat MIT three years running, and a group of ragtag, impoverished Mexican boys armed

only with faith, a dream, and a baseball can go from a dirty dusty field in Mexico to winning the Little League Championship to meeting the President of the United States of America, then I, Carlos Michael Padilla, can beat the odds and be a difference maker too!

My former wife, former and current friends and colleagues, former classmates, and others are right – **be who God made you to be**; who He intended you to be, because in the end, while He does not need it from us, what you do in the service of others [and to a degree, for yourself] gives Him glory.

--CM



Superhero Facts

I cannot attest to the accuracy of these facts, which I pulled from Google. If you're a superhero Comic Book expert and these facts are incorrect, please let me know.

Flash and Quicksilver

The Flash and Quicksilver have often raced to see who's faster. The Flash lost in the Marvel Universe because he was cut off from the speed force. But when it comes down to it, he is indeed the fastest of the two.

Dr. Strange

Before Dr. Strange joined the "Avengers," he assembled the team known as "The Defenders." The lineup included The Hulk, Namor, and The Silver Surfer.

Venom

Venom is immune to Spiderman's spider senses, and Ghost Rider's penance stare.



I Remember...

Tennis Anyone!?

I remember registering to play tennis as a freshman at Edgewood High School, West Covina, California, with the hope of one day lettering in the sport. My registration was accepted, and I was looking forward to joining the team. Then came the dreaded telephone call. I was told that my registration had been denied and that I should consider joining a different sport. Talk about disappointed.

Angel's Hardware Store

I remember taking trips with dad to Angel's Hardware Store in El Monte, California. Oh, how I used to loathe those trips [then]. Now that dad is gone, I would welcome going with him to the hardware store.

Gemco and TG&Y

Two favorite stores growing up, besides Thompson's Market, were Gemco and TG&Y. I preferred the latter to the former, especially during the Fall. TG&Y was my favorite store to purchase holiday and seasonal decorations, especially for Fall, Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Great memories!

Thursday, February 22, 2024

I awoke earlier than usual this morning--a few minutes before 3:30 AM. I believe Matthew may still be awake in his room. His door is open, and the television is on.

I want to share what is on my mind, however, in the interest of good neighborly relationships, I suppose it is best to do as Mary did and keep those things in the silence of my heart.

I had a busy Wednesday.

I did the usual *stuff* that I do each morning. After Mark got ready and came into the living room—sometime near 11:00 AM, we hopped into the car and drove to Calvary Cemetery to sign the necessary paperwork and leave the \$1500 deposit (check #5624) as part of my end-of-life arrangements.

The balance due is \$1,768.34, which will be paid over a two (2) year period at \$73.68 per month, with one final payment of \$73.30 in the 24th month.

I am profoundly grateful to the Lord, through Mark, for his financial assistance.

After leaving the cemetery, Mark and I had lunch at **Ludger's Bavarian Cakery**, 6527 E 91st St., Tulsa, OK. 74133.

I ordered a BLT. Mark ordered a Tuna Fish Salad Sandwich. We both ordered a slice of cheesecake. Mine was free due to becoming a recent rewards member.

After concluding our business and lunch, we returned to the house.

As I attempted to get some work done, Shelia from next door called and stated to Mark that Randy (her husband) was ready to climb onto the roof and remove one of two attic turbine vents that needed to be replaced.

Slightly annoyed, which I should not have been, I went outside with Matt and Josh to assist Randy. After bringing the fan down, Mark, Matt, and me drove to Sutherland's on 21st Street and purchased two (2) replacement turbine fans. They were about \$59.00 each, less than the price we were quoted over the telephone when Mark called.

Upon our return, Randy came over and installed the first fan. However, the second fan gave him a bit of trouble. Because of the way the fan was bent, two of the three screws were going to require being cut with a saw. Thankfully Randy had the right saw and eventually was able to remove and install the second fan.

I am happy to report that both fans are working as they should. Praise God. We saved money too! I paid Randy with the \$50 Matthew gave me (to save for myself) for the work. He was grateful. Mark had an extra \$20 and gave that to Randy as well.

All in all, it was a good but busy day. I forgot to mention that I stopped at St. Thomas More Catholic Church Thursday morning to participate in the **“24 Hour Adoration and Confession”** that Fr. Leo started in 2022.

I am so glad that I did. I went to confession with Fr. Leo, then stayed in the Church with the Lord and other faithful as I prayed the Rosary.

That truly was a beautiful blessing.

I have a COHO (Coalition of Hispanic Organizations) meeting this afternoon. Today will be about strategic planning. It will be a two-hour meeting.

The morning started out rough.

Matthew (my middle son) was upset about something and hit me first thing this morning with it. I ended up spending about three hours with him, mainly listening and attempting to diffuse the situation. By the grace of God, I was successful.

Rather than react with anger to his anger, I responded with love, patience, and understanding. I let him say what he felt needed to be said, offered an explanation where I could, and when necessary, an apology as well.

I believe I understand why he is upset and, I suppose, I cannot blame him. All I can do is be his Father, love him, and try to guide him where I can but only through the grace of God. Lord knows I have messed things up enough to attempt to do anything on my own. However, with God’s grace, we can get through this.

I keep asking myself, “Carlos, why are you writing this book? Who cares about your life, who you are and who you were? One generation notwithstanding, those who knew you will be gone, and all of this won’t matter—will it?”

I think it does matter, not because of me, because the person asking that question is correct—in *the grand scheme of life, who I am is not important*. A generation or two after my death, I will be long forgotten.

However, so long as God knows who I am and loves me, that is all that matters.

What is important is the good that I do.

If the reader can take away something from anything good, I did that is mentioned in these pages and it becomes a good for that person, then *mission accomplished*. That is all that matters, and I am okay with that.

--CM





What Was I Thinking?

When I launched Carlos Michael Communications, I did so with the intent of becoming a motivational speaker for hire.

That was mid-2000s.

Carlos Michael Communications, the *media* part came later, never became anything more than a hobby and I never reached the

pinnacle of becoming a world renowned motivational speaker and author as I thought I was supposed to be.

Heck! I never even became a YouTube sensation! I did not know if it was because of poor marketing (or lack of), boring content, I looked bad on camera, or I came across as sounding “too old!”.

Whatever the reason, I felt like an old man wearing a very old pair of skivvies—*neither of which was pretty nor comfortable to look at.*

However, I did manage to create a gnat of a niche as a baby boomer podcaster and video blogger on Facebook. My Facebook audience seems to outpace the YouTube audience 30 to 1.

Still, I enjoy planting seeds with a focus on growing faith and developing good neighbor-to-neighbor relationships on my current show: **2468 Friday.**

As long as God is being served and neighbors are being helped, that is all that matters in the end. –CM



Saturday, February 24, 2024

Friday evening, when I took a shower and felt the soap sting the lacerated wounds, I received on my arms and legs from the work we completed earlier in the day [in the backyard], I could not help but think of Our Lord.

I thought to myself, *"If these 'scratches' for lack of a better word hurt me when the soap and water run over them, how much more did the wounds my Lord suffered during His Crucifixion hurt Him?"*

My *suffering*, if you will, is nothing compared to that of my Savior.

That was a good opportunity during this time of Lent to remind myself of why the Lord's love and sacrifice is so important and why we must use this time during Lent to *fast, pray, and give alms*.

THE BACKYARD

Speaking of the backyard, the bushes and trees that were targeted for trimming have been trimmed. There is still some work to be done, however, with the help of Randy [next door neighbor] and my sons [Josha and Matthew], we managed to get a lot done.

Mark mentioned that we may have to contact the H.O.W. Foundation, 5649 S. Garnett Rd., Tulsa, OK 74146 to get an estimate on how much it would cost to haul the debris away.

H.O.W. was formed over 40 years ago by Tulsa businessmen and women as a residential recovery program for men suffering from alcohol or drug addiction. The program focuses on the value of a strong work ethic and learning to cope without the use of substances.

We have used their services previously. I applaud them for what they are attempting to do. Perhaps we can find a way to support this organization in the future.

One last point about the backyard: it was nice being outside, spending time and working on something together with the boys. I am not certain how much the boys enjoyed the experience, the work notwithstanding, but I did.

COMMITTED TO CHANGE

Something that we all find difficult to do is *change*. We don't like change. We are oftentimes uncomfortable with change. We even became irritated, frustrated, and sometimes, downright angry with change.

However, when we look at change beyond ourselves [as we probably should with many things], we ultimately conclude that change is really a good thing, not a bad—at least that is true with me.

I realize there is much that I desire [for love of God, the greater good, and the self-] that I wish to change about myself.

Being 62 years old, I don't know how much time the Father Creator will bless to me to make those changes, but I will do my best moving forward with each day that is blessed to me.

--CM



Daily Struggles

It seems that I struggle internally, emotionally, and mentally with a great many things these days. I use the word great as if to imply that my struggles are greater than my neighbors. Let's just say that I seem to have much on my mind and heart these days.

I continue to question with all the knowledge we have with respect to history--*why society continues to behave as we do*, including me!

That's the kicker!

I know what my faith tells me, and I accept and believe in that truth with all my heart, and yet I continue to fall in perpetual sin.

I hate sin. I hate my sins. I hate my perpetual sins. As embarrassed as I am to go to confession and confess the same tired sins [*thankfully to a patient and loving God in the person of His priest through the sacrament of Reconciliation*] otherwise there would be no hope for me. None whatsoever.

What I need to remember is what Fr. Brian, pastor of St. Benedict's Catholic Church in Broken Arrow once said to me in the confessional:

“Despite the perpetual sins, what is important is that you recognize your brokenness and continue to seek the mercy of Christ through the sacrament.”

That is why we should never despair. **Jesus' mercy is greater than our sins.** Yes, be contrite for sin—every sin. But more importantly, believe in and trust in His mercy.

Amazing Possibilities: *365 Days of Inspiration*, M.Kelley (2020). Kakadu LLC. Blue Sparrow Books, North Palm Beach, Florida. P.62

In this reflection for February 23, Kelly asks the reader when was the last time the reader *paused to really think about their life*. He then followed up that question by stating that ***when we are too busy to reflect on our lives, we are not busy doing the right things.***

How would you interpret Kelley's closing statement? As to the former, I think about my life almost daily.

I constantly ask myself, ***"How was I yesterday in contrast to the previous day? What did I do or say [or not do or say] that I can do better today? How can I be a better servant, father, brother, friend, uncle, grandfather, etc?"***

I sometimes don't know how to answer my own questions except to say that I fail often.

However, I can tell you this much—if I remain persistent and trust that God has a plan and He knows what He is doing, I am convinced that in the end I will always do the right thing. And when I don't, I will go to confession and find my way back through the grace of God to doing the right thing.





The Jerry Lewis MDA Labor Day Telethon

I don't recall when I first began watching Lewis' MDA Telethon. For that matter, when I stopped watching it. What I do recall is how I felt each time Lewis showed one of "his kids" on the television screen and told the backstory of their struggle with Muscular Dystrophy – *a group of more than*

30 genetic diseases that cause progressive muscle weakness and degeneration (Google, 2024). I felt sad for those suffering from the disease, but happy at the same time because everyone involved, including the stars, were raising money and awareness in the hope of educating the public about Muscular Dystrophy while attempting to find a cure for the disease.

I remember at it's zenith [for me], staying up all night from beginning to end, taking careful note of the totals raised each hour and the stars in order of appearance, which I jotted down in a journal style book I called my "MDA Book."

This was during the time the family lived at the house on Francisquito Avenue (2245 W. Francisquito Ave), located in West Covina, California. I don't recall what happened to the MDA Book, however, like many other temporary things in life, it became lost to time.

I became interested in the telethon mainly because as a child [who thought as a child] I was a huge Jerry Lewis fan. My favorite "Lewis" movie being *The Geisha Boy* (1958); a film about a bumbling musician named *Gilbert Wooley*, who stumbles from one chaotic situation to the next when he joins a USO tour in the Far East.

My favorite line in the movie was each time the young boy played by *Robert Hirano* as *Mitsuo Watanabe* would say: “Mr. Wooley! Mr. Wooley!”

According to Google, Hirano was born September 28, 1951, ten years prior to my birth in Dec. 1961. At the time of this writing, Mr. Hirano is 75 years old.

As is the case during our *maturation process*, I soon became aware of some of the backstage *ugliness* associated with the telethon: Lewis’ comments and health issues; the criticisms and negative comments of some people, including adults and former *Jerry’s Kids* who were impacted by the disease, accusing the telethon of exposing the children to a sort of voyeuristic...well, why don't you read this comment from *Sheila Moeschen*, which I found in an article on [Wikipedia](#):

According to author Sheila Moeschen, these vignettes "invited spectators to voyeuristically experience life stories of the dystrophic," with their standardized narrative structures "constituting the telethon's affective core around which discourses of sympathy, pity, fear, or hope revolve(d)." [\[119\]](#): 322

Regardless of the pros and cons with respect to everyday Joe Public, I for one am proud of what Jerry, the stars, and the MDAA organization attempted to do to help those afflicted with muscular dystrophy. I doubt I would have been as informed about this horrible disease if not for the telethon. Okay, so it wasn’t perfect. What is in the hands of humanity?

If only people would do today what people were willing to do yesterday.
The world would most likely be better than what it is today.

The Jerry Lewis MDA Labor Day Telethon first aired on September 4, 1965. The final episode was August 31, 2014. Lewis' final episode was at the conclusion of the 2010 telethon. It marked the end of an era!



Favorite Jerry Lewis Movie?
"The Geisha Boy"
1958

CARLOS MICHAEL



Reconciliation

There are many reasons that I am grateful to Christ, the Church, and my parents.

To my parents because of the unconditional love they had for me and my siblings, and for the life lessons learned. I am especially grateful to my parents for the gift of my faith.

To the Church, I am grateful for her love, her teachings, and despite human error—that she always listened to the voice of the Holy Spirit and brought us out of many “unholy” or “concerning” situations.

To the Lord, I cannot say enough. He gave His life for you and me only because He loves us that much. Sure, we hear

about the God of the Old Testament and how frightening He was. But is that really who God is? No, I don't believe that.

I view God as the Creator who is worthy of our love, adoration, worship, etc. But as a Father, who acts as a Father, just as we parents do with our own children, He sometimes has to “take out the spiritual belt” as it were not as an act of aggression, but as an act of love.

“Right! If punishing my child is an act of love, then I shouldn't be a parent!”

While I cannot explain it, I disagree. Sure, my mother may have gone overboard with the discipline at times when we were children, but it was because she wanted us to learn, grow, and understand that there are consequences to our actions just as there are consequences to our sins.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation, thankfully is not a punishment, but a way to Jesus' mercy that we cannot put a price on. For this Sacrament, I am always grateful.



His mercy is greater than our sins.

Visual Learner



In case you did not know, I am a visual person. Perhaps *visual learner* is the proper term. As a visual learner, I am a person who, according to Bay Atlantic University, Washington, D.C., *learns through images, graphs, charts, diagrams, and other visual aids. Visual learners can easily recall information by visualizing it in their minds and tend to have strong spatial awareness and a keen eye for detail.*

Okay, what is *spatial awareness*?

According to Healthline.com, *Spatial awareness is the ability to understand your body's position in relation to your surroundings. It can impact everything from picking up a book to navigating social settings.*

Spatial awareness refers to being aware of your surroundings and your position relative to them.

Some examples of special awareness include:

- 1 Being able to do mental rotations in your head.
- 2 Visualizing objects from different perspectives.
- 3 Coordinating how different space is used in relation to other space.
- 4 Representing one object to mean another object (e.g. mapping).

Mental mapping is a spatial awareness that involves creating a mental model of your surroundings to plan and navigate.

I suppose I should have sought a career as a *graphic designer* because I like to use graphics to convey ideas or messages, especially when using

certain graphics to illustrate or highlight a specific point during my life journey or represent something about myself.

Throughout this *handbook*, you will find a wide array of graphics and photos such as the one shown below.

Each graphic tells a story—one part of the larger story relative to me. Of course, the goal is never to offend the reader. Rather, my hope is that with each graphic, you will gain better insight into the heart, mind, and soul, not to mention the past and present timelines, of the who, what, when, where, why, and how of Carlos Michael.

“Let’s Coffee Break!”



If I could afford it, this is how I would dress.



Sunday, February 25, 2024

I could begin by complaining about how emotionally traumatizing the last few days have been, however, I am not going to do that.

Why would I choose (*everything comes down to a choice*) to complain when there are so many of my neighbors around the world who are suffering in ways far worse than what I believe I am experiencing in my small part of the world?

I believe it would be selfish of me to do that. If dad were physically present today, he would, in his own way, tell me the same thing—
“Charlie, thinking about our own misery is easier than thinking about the misery of others because it takes the focus off of us and on them, however, when you think about it son, when we are not thinking about us but about others, we are actually thinking about the Lord and that gives value not just to our suffering but to our thoughts.”

Speaking of dad, I wish we had been closer and spent more time together. I don’t know how much of that *lack of spending time together* was because of life, work, family, health, and ME!

That’s right, me!

Looking back, I can see where I missed many opportunities to spend time with dad because I was too busy thinking about me that I couldn’t see just who it was that I had in front of me—*one of the best dads ever*.

Dad wasn’t an educated man. I believe mother said that he only made it to the eighth grade. But he learned enough to know how to provide for his family, purchase two houses (over his lifetime), several cars, taught his sons the meaning of hard work and contributing to family and society, and the importance of faith and believing in God.

Suddenly I became very emotional thinking about dad. I believe it is because I have been blessed with a full awareness of how much I did as a son to disappoint or let my father down for which I am profoundly sorry.

This was a moment I needed, and I am grateful to God the Father for allowing me to have this moment with my father. I believe my father knows how sorry I am and how much I loved him.

There was once upon a time when I shamefully denied that I was my father's son. I hated who I was and the heritage that the color of my skin represented, including carrying my father's name, both first and last.

The reason for feeling that way had very little to do with my dad and more to do with my incorrect and unforgiving perception of the "raza" or race.

That attitude used to drive my parents crazy, especially dad and my brother Frank. While it was wrong, I felt the way I did for a reason – **"YOU MEXICANS ARE NOTHING BUT DIRTY PEOPLE!!!"**

The idea of being accused of being dirty was an accusation that I could never accept. How you see me today is as I was as a young man, including that day in 1970 at nine years old when that elderly gentleman made that statement.

What made that comment even more destructive is the fact that he attached it to the heritage of my ancestors. Calling me *dirty* meant that he was calling my parents, grandparents and great grandparents dirty. The idea of that being true (which it wasn't) made me physically ill.

As a result, I rejected everything to do with my Hispanic heritage and culture, turning instead to those Caucasians who would have me, including those who sexually molested me.

As far as I was concerned, any acceptance by any Caucasian who would have me was an act of love and a rejection of that old man's statement, even at the expense of letting them have their way with me in a way no adult should have with a broken child.

How wrong I was.

That in turn caused a cancerous schism between me and my family, especially my parents. Were it not for their unconditional love, patience (and faith) during a very difficult time in my life, I shudder to think how much more challenging my life would have been.

I don't know why I shared all that. I only meant to share that I had thought about my father this morning.

I missed attending Mass this morning having gone Saturday evening to the Vigil Mass at St. Benedict's. To my horror, I realized as I entered the Church parking lot that I forgot to put deodorant on after showering. If that long-neck Giraffe had not been present with me, I would have put the car in drive and immediately returned home. However, since we were there, I had to trust that God would keep the *pits* from vaporizing my neighbor worshippers including the Giraffe.

By Giraffe I am referring to Bro. G (Gary).

Praise God that I made it through Mass with no odiferous green gas cloud emanating from my wonderfully chiseled masculine pits (*I write chuckling to myself*), but I do pray that never happens again.

That just goes to demonstrate that I was speaking the truth when I stated that I had been stressing lately. So much so that I forgot to apply deodorant to my pits on a Saturday evening in preparation to attend Mass (*still laughing at myself!*).



Childhood Memories

1 Climbing to the top of the apricot tree in the backyard of our home, losing my footing and falling straight down onto a large piece of plywood. I recall bouncing when I hit the plywood. Ouch!

2 My first trip to Disneyland. I was 7 years old. I remember looking toward the Main Street Railroad Station and saying with complete determination, "One day I will work here." That was 1968. 12 years later (1980) I was given an employment offer, albeit a short one.

3. The fear I experienced when we arrived home after visiting a relative only to find the door wide open and the lights on. We were robbed.

4 Wetting the bed until I was 12 years old. That was not a pleasant experience.

5 Told by an elderly gentleman in a supermarket line that "We Mexicans are nothing but dirty people."

6 Being told by certain older males that the only way an overweight ugly child like me could be loved was to do exactly as they said, which usually meant behaving in a way that no child should ever be expected to do.

7 Being forced to dress up for Halloween as a little girl by older female cousins. Humiliating!



Monday, February 26, 2023

Time: 6:15 A.M.

I learned something new this morning. Glory to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Perhaps I should rephrase that. I “came into understanding” about two *virtues* that I believe I have NOT been practicing well: *charity* and *humility*.

One cannot practice *charity* without first mastering or at the very least, understanding *humility*.

If I understand what I looked up this morning, both take the focus off me and places it where that focus should be—on God and neighbor.

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church: Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God (CCC 1822).

Interesting...

Does that mean that if I do not love myself as I do my neighbor than I am not truly loving God and neighbor?

If that is indeed the case, I need to correct that.

That has always been a nemesis for me – *loving myself as I love my neighbors*.

How is it that I can have so much love for others and so very little love for myself?

I wonder if I have this all wrong.

I believe I do love myself because I absolutely believe that my love (for anything) is in response to God’s love for me.

To do otherwise would almost seem that I am rejecting God's love, and I don't want to do that!

This is great. Thank you, Holy Spirit for opening my heart, mind, eyes, ears, and soul.

Let's look at *humility*.

Humility is the virtue that restrains the movement of the mind towards some excellence, particularly restraining the mind from thinking one is greater than one truly is before God. *Humility is the disposition to accept our impoverished dependence upon God.* Humility is living with the RIGHT understanding of WHO GOD IS, who I am, and who you are. *"Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interest but take an interest in others too."* Philippians 2:3-4

"Don't be selfish. Don't look out only for you own interest but take an interest in others."

That really speaks to me. How often when I am *complaining* in this journal about *anything*, I am thinking of myself and not of others.

Which begs this question, *"What type of servant am I?"* Am I a *greater than* or a *lesser than* when it comes to thinking about or serving others?"

Do I serve those that I love or at least like comfortably *greater than* those who I love but am not comfortable with whom I serve or think about *less than* the others?

If indeed I do that, then I am truly sorry to God and the lesser than neighbors because I have put others and myself above them regardless of how I justify it.

Everyone is my neighbor. That means that when I can, in accordance with God's will, regardless of the individual—*when I see a need the onus is on me to try and fill that need.*

Well intentioned people say that I should think about myself because of how much I give to others.

Does that mean I should think that way when it comes to them?

If I am thinking of me, then who is thinking of the others?

Let me take this one step further. How much *charity* and *humility* am I showing at home?

How often do I interact with my *first neighbors*? How well am I getting to know them? How much time do I devote to learning about what is important to them? I have two sons, and two roommates (who are also BFF's) that I share this dwelling place with but how well do I really know them? How often do I step out of my comfort zone and meet their needs, spend time talking with them, knowing them, learning from them?

How often do I cut myself off from them, walking past them as if they were not physically present?

What is charity and humility if I don't start that at home?

I realize I have a life to live and work to accomplish and that I cannot spend every minute of my day with my first neighbors, but I can do better than I have been doing even when it is something that I don't want to do.

That is when I am truly practicing charity and humility. However, if what I do is not performed with joy for the sake of God's love, then to do anything without that joy and love, is more like performing the deed to be seen or to satisfy my own ego.

That would make me a hypocrite!

If indeed that is case, it would be better had I done nothing at all.

This is a lot to take in. I have much to reflect upon. However, I am truly grateful to the Triune God: *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit* for opening my eyes, ears, heart, and soul to that which was lost to me until today.

“Dear Father God, your grace is sufficient for me. How may I serve you today?”

Time: 7:41 A.M.





Patron Saint: St. Francis of Assisi

Once upon a time, many years ago, as I was preparing for Confirmation, we were required to select a patron saint for our Confirmation name.

The name I chose without giving it a second thought was *St. Francis of Assisi*.

As a child, I was drawn to Francis' love for God, his humility (which I didn't understand until years later), and the fact that he rejected everything for his love for God.

I realize some people who know me well may find this difficult, almost scandalous to believe, but *the simpler and least complicated my life is; the less I own in possessions and the more that I can give to God through the poor, the happier I am.*

That is what St. Francis taught me and that is why I love living life as a *religious*.

Living life in communion with God through my brother religious was one of the main attractions to seeking acceptance into the seminary during the early 80s.

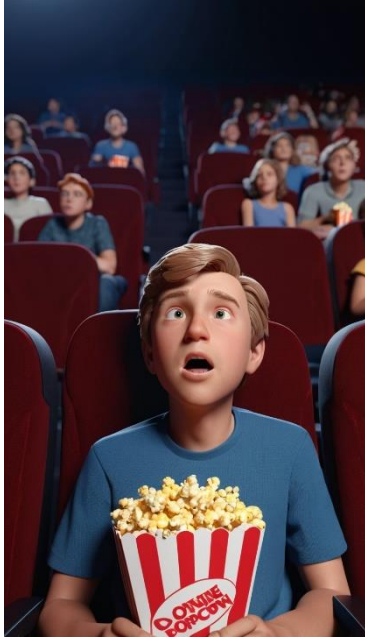
There is nothing more satisfying in life than to live life as a religious. I can't even put it into words, except to say that saints like Francis of Assisi, Padre Pio, Charles Borromeo, Don Bosco, Maximilliam Kolbe, Maria Faustina Kowalska, Mother Cabrini, the Fatima children, Bernadette Soubirous, Margaret Mary Alacoque, Catherine Laboure, and others have demonstrated to me through how they lived their lives is how I should live mine.

Trying to live that life outside the walls of a religious community is much more challenging to do, but not impossible.

The spirit of St. Francis and his love for God, neighbor, simplicity, and service is why I selected his name as my Confirmation name.

St. Francis, pray for me (and us).





What Does It Mean to Be a Good Person?

According to the Catholic365.com website in an article titled, *Being A Good Person and Catholicism*, by Anne DeSantis, January 6, 2022:

In its basic sense, to be a “good person” is to be someone who cares deeply about other people including their salvation. How we treat people and not what we think of them should be at the top of our list if we are not going to be like the goats described in Chapter 25 of Matthew’s Gospel.

According to DeSantis, *Jesus speaks of separating the sheep from the goats according to how we have responded to the sick, the poor, the outcast, and the rejected. The Lord then separated them according to how they responded to those people. Those who cared for the outcasts were brought into His Kingdom, and those who ignored them were not.*

Can I truly call myself a “good person” if in my daily duty of serving God through my neighbors, I fail to respond to the sick, the poor, the outcast, and the rejected?

No, I don’t believe that I can.

Then I believe it is time for me to be the good person that God wants me to be and that begins at home.

Tuesday, February 27, 2028

Time: 5:58 AM

Whew! I woke up late this morning. Five minutes before 4:00 A.M. I must have been tired last night.

Jesus + Mary + Joseph, Pray for us!

I hope Mark is feeling better. His back has been hurting him the last few days. Prayers. Prayers. Prayers.

I am also praying for Leda Diedrich, Choir Director at St. Thomas More (Tulsa), as well as for Rose Guglielmo and her family, for Fred and Janet Bassett (both who were recently in the hospital due to a broken hip [Janet] and Sepsis [Fred]). I am also praying for my dear friend Sally and her husband Jose. My prayer is that we can wrestle from the hands of the devil as many marriages as we can, especially Catholic marriages, always in accordance with God's Will.

That creature and his pride. Does he hate God that much that he wants to destroy all that is good and loved by God?

Marriages, as with life and family, are sacred. At least to me they are. I want to spend the remainder of my life, if only in prayer, if need be, praying for marriages and the family.

"Sister Sis!"

I had an opportunity to talk by cell phone with my sister Kristina on Monday afternoon. She sounded great. She is on fire for the Lord and Church and is really turning her life around. God is great!

She informed me that she is filing for early retirement through work and should be moving to Montana sometime in early April to join her daughter Valerie and grandson. Valerie is serving in the military and is currently based in Montana.

Kristina said the hope is that when Valerie is reassigned, she will be reassigned to a base in North Carolina (first choice) or Florida (second choice).

Florida is a familiar place for my sister and her family since they bought a house and lived there about 12 years. Before that they spent time in Louisiana (maybe 3 years).

My sister moved back to southern California when my brother Frank took ill with cancer. She wanted to help my sister-in-law (Sonia) take care of my brother. I was able to spend about four weeks helping my sister take care of my brother before he passed in August 2013.

The bulk of our conversation was about early retirement, Social Security, family, and faith.

I felt moved to plant a seed with my sister. I suggested that she and I should form a brother/sister team talking publicly about *suicide* and *sexual abuse* tying both topics back to God.

My sister lost her son (Anthony) to suicide in 2022. I was sexually abused. I don't know. I think we can help some people with our stories.

However things turn out, I pray for nothing but good blessings for my sister and her family.

Reflection

As I examine my conscience from Monday, I realized that I still have a long way to go with respect to being an obedient servant and a good person.

Monday's takeaway: Pray. Speak less. Smile. Love.

--CM

Alex Di Carlo (d.1984)

Perhaps the most challenging and one and only time that I was ever angry with God was in 1984.

During this time, I was a Postulant with the Society of Divine Vocations (aka Vocationist Fathers), in Newark, New Jersey.

I was 23 years old.

Alex joined the order from a previous order in Italy earlier that year. Maybe even late 1983.

He was once described by the other brothers as being a pompous “arce” who thought he knew more than they or was better than they.

And these were future priests?

Humans being what we are.

Long story, short: Alex arrived. We became close. He starts to question God. Alex decides to leave the order. Commits suicide three days later.

Devastated by the news, my faith is shaken. I make the decision to leave the order. During dinner with my mother at the Denny’s Restaurant just off the 10 Freeway and Puente Ave., I confess to mother how angry I was with God at that moment.

I was so angry, I decided right then and there that I wanted nothing more to do with God, His Church, and my faith as a Roman Catholic.

FACTS ABOUT ALEX

Alex was a Canadian citizen of Italian ancestry. He had black hair that he kept trimmed, parted on the side. He wore glasses and had a strong jaw line and forehead. He looked like what I imagine a Roman Senator or Philosopher might have looked like back during the toga wearing days.

He was the youngest of two children. His sibling was a sister.

When Alex left the seminary, his mother was dying from cancer. It was then that I learned his father was gone too. I remember him saying to me, “At least if you leave here, you have something to go back to, I have nothing!”

Alex joined our order after leaving the order of the *Congregation of the Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary* that was founded by then “Bro. Gino Burresti,” who was reported to have the wounds of the Stigmata as did St. Padre Pio.

When I first met Alex, I realized that I had pre-judged him (and I was wrong) based on what I heard the brothers say. However, after getting to know and listen to him, we became the best of friends—friends as two brothers should be.

Of course, mother was devastated. Seeing the tears roll down her face pained me as a son, but it wasn't enough to convince me to recant what I had just confessed. I meant what I said. **God had to go!**

After leaving the restaurant and apologizing to mom for making her cry, mom suggested that when we get home, I get some rest. She said, **"Maybe things will look differently in the morning."**

I said nothing. When we arrived home, I hugged mom one last time, and with that heartfelt deep in my soul anger, I went to bed saying one last time to God, **"We're through!"**

What occurred after I fell asleep, I cannot explain. Call me crazy. Attribute it to 'bad beef' as in the case of Ebenezer Scrooge, or an act of God's love for one of His children.

However, you wish to call or classify it, something miraculous (for lack of a better word) occurred that changed my heart overnight. I don't know how else to describe it.

I laid down in the bed and had no sooner closed my eyes, when I felt a bump at the foot of the bed. I didn't think too much of it. In fact, I didn't even peek over the covers to look. I simply ignored it.

Not to be ignored, there was a second bump against the headboard, only this time it felt as though it had been done on purpose. It was as if someone had purposely bumped their knee against the headboard to get my attention.

This time I peered over the covers, not as if I were afraid, but in response to the second thump. To my surprise, there was what appeared to be a young man, about my age, maybe slightly older, standing in the shadows at the foot of my bed.

I could see part of his torso as the light shining from above brushed against him, but I could not see his face—that is until he walked enough into the light that I could see who he was.

NOTE: It just occurred to me after all these years. Why didn't I notice this before? The light that I just described did not come from a lamp source because I didn't turn any lights on. It was just there when I peered over the covers.

When I saw that the figure was Alex, I asked why he was there. He responded with this question, **“Why are you angry?”**

I did not respond, so, he asked me again, **“Why are you angry?”**

I asked again before responding to his question, **“What are you doing here?”** Then I said, **“You know why I am angry.”**

It was at that point that he extended his left arm and bade me to take his hand. Initially, I refused. However, after insisting a second time, I raised myself up from the bed and took his hand.

Upon touching his hand, I immediately found myself no longer in the room. *This is going to sound crazy!* Alex and I were flying. Our hands were still interlocked but I wasn't afraid. Somehow, I knew that if I was holding his hand, I was safe.

Here is where the conversation changed. While we were in the room talking, I saw his lips moving and could physically hear him speak with my ears. However, once we left the room, I could see his lips moving, but instead of hearing him with my ears, I was hearing him with my heart.

I will continue this entry in the March edition of 2468 Friday!

What is it like to be sexually molested?

Once upon a time, several years back, someone sent me an email and asked, “What did it feel like to be sexually molested?”

At first, I was angered by the question because I didn’t know if the person asking the question was being sincere, voyeuristic, or both!

However, after spending considerable time thinking about the question, I decided that it was a fair question to ask and one that deserved an answer.

*I answered that question on pages 30-32 of my book, **Baltimore Monday: A Celebration of Life beyond Sexual Abuse**, 2006, Signature Book Printing, Gaithersburg, MD.*

Here is how I described that experience:

“Being molested for an extended period, is like being a passenger on a cruise ship that never docks. It just keeps going and going.

To some, that may seem like the ultimate adventure. To the child who is being sexually molested, it is not an adventure at all.

You spend a portion of your life following the orders of the predator; your shipmate as it were.

You spend the other part of your life, feeling guilty because you believe what the predator has told you repeatedly, ‘This is all YOUR fault!’

You spend a great deal of time searching your heart and mind for answers to questions that were never asked.

You create excuses for the person committing the act, to the point that you find yourself defending the offender because you believe what he has told you, ‘This is the only way fat, ugly throw away kids like you can

know that you are loved. If it were not for me, you wouldn't know what love is.'

Even when you reach adulthood, when you are at an age where the predator can no longer hurt you, his words continue to haunt you.

'Don't ever tell anyone what happened here. Not only will you be punished by your parents, but you might also go to jail. What I am doing to you here is nothing compared to what they are going to do to you in jail!'

What a scary thought for a frightened child to have to go to bed at night thinking about.

It isn't enough that the offender strips you of your humanity, not to mention your clothes. He also burdens you with the fear of what could happen to you should you disclose his behavior.

What else can you think?

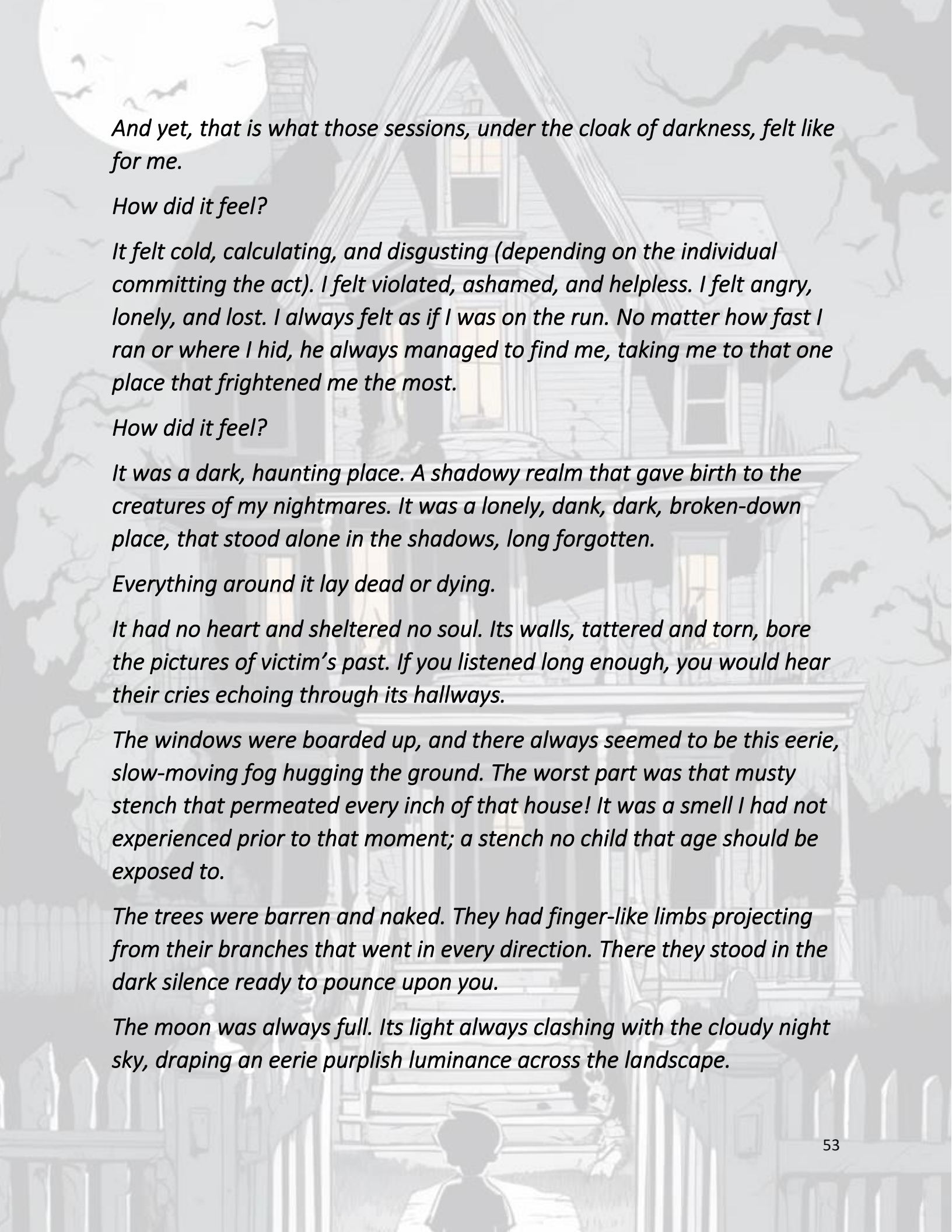
One predator once said to me, 'Evil little boys like you who share their penis with a grown up will spend all of eternity in hell dancing with the devil.'

Given my Catholic upbringing, the ideal of spending an eternity dancing with the devil was a far more frightening prospect for me than anything that he was doing to me.

Back to the question, "What did it feel like to be molested?"

I viewed it two ways. First the ship analogy which I recently described. The other more prevalent analogy was the haunted house.

Nothing frightened me more ... um ... that isn't true because I was afraid of a lot of things. Let's just say that the idea of being locked inside a haunted house, with no escape, was a heart-pounding, foreboding, event that I would never want to experience.



And yet, that is what those sessions, under the cloak of darkness, felt like for me.

How did it feel?

It felt cold, calculating, and disgusting (depending on the individual committing the act). I felt violated, ashamed, and helpless. I felt angry, lonely, and lost. I always felt as if I was on the run. No matter how fast I ran or where I hid, he always managed to find me, taking me to that one place that frightened me the most.

How did it feel?

It was a dark, haunting place. A shadowy realm that gave birth to the creatures of my nightmares. It was a lonely, dank, dark, broken-down place, that stood alone in the shadows, long forgotten.

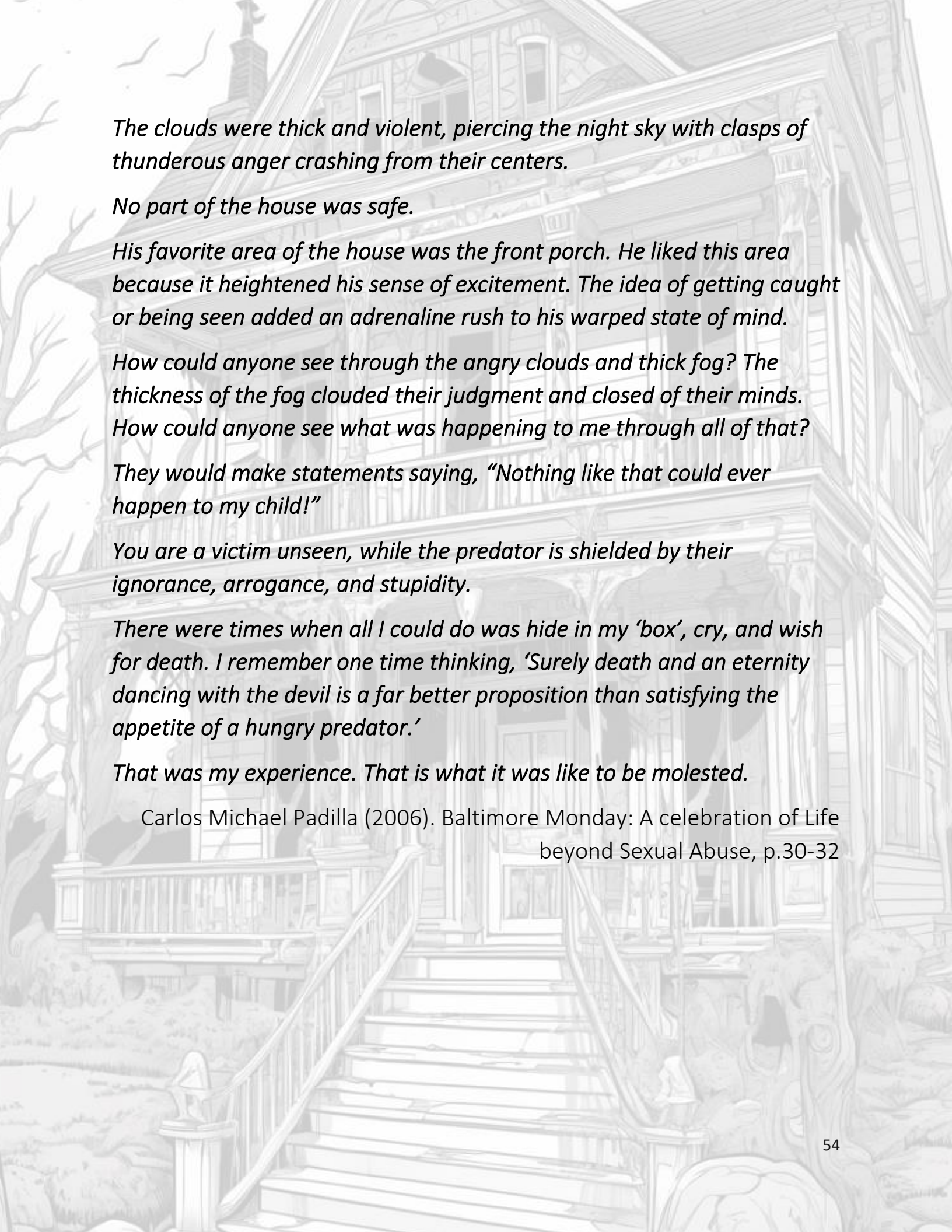
Everything around it lay dead or dying.

It had no heart and sheltered no soul. Its walls, tattered and torn, bore the pictures of victim's past. If you listened long enough, you would hear their cries echoing through its hallways.

The windows were boarded up, and there always seemed to be this eerie, slow-moving fog hugging the ground. The worst part was that musty stench that permeated every inch of that house! It was a smell I had not experienced prior to that moment; a stench no child that age should be exposed to.

The trees were barren and naked. They had finger-like limbs projecting from their branches that went in every direction. There they stood in the dark silence ready to pounce upon you.

The moon was always full. Its light always clashing with the cloudy night sky, draping an eerie purplish luminance across the landscape.



The clouds were thick and violent, piercing the night sky with clasps of thunderous anger crashing from their centers.

No part of the house was safe.

His favorite area of the house was the front porch. He liked this area because it heightened his sense of excitement. The idea of getting caught or being seen added an adrenaline rush to his warped state of mind.

How could anyone see through the angry clouds and thick fog? The thickness of the fog clouded their judgment and closed of their minds. How could anyone see what was happening to me through all of that?

They would make statements saying, "Nothing like that could ever happen to my child!"

You are a victim unseen, while the predator is shielded by their ignorance, arrogance, and stupidity.

There were times when all I could do was hide in my 'box', cry, and wish for death. I remember one time thinking, 'Surely death and an eternity dancing with the devil is a far better proposition than satisfying the appetite of a hungry predator.'

That was my experience. That is what it was like to be molested.

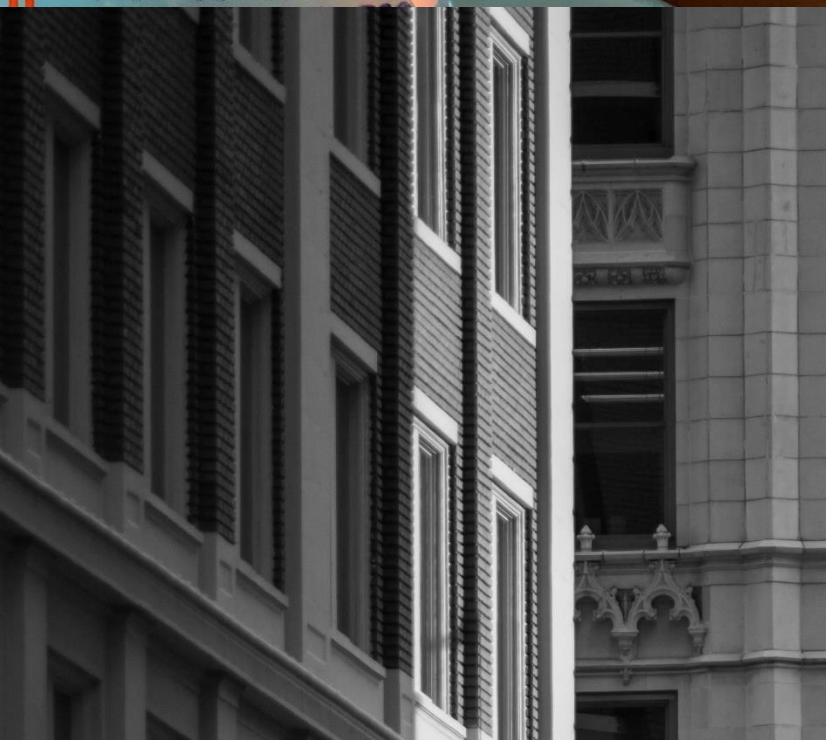
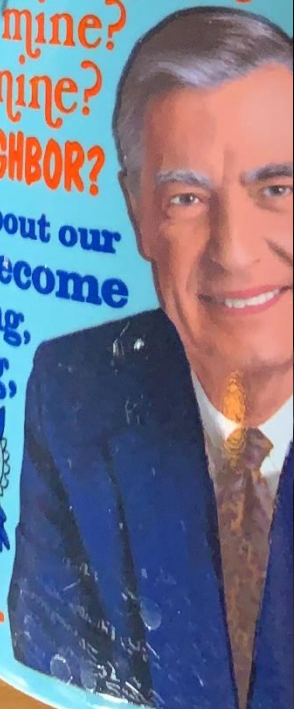
Carlos Michael Padilla (2006). Baltimore Monday: A celebration of Life beyond Sexual Abuse, p.30-32



...neighborhood, YOU ALWAYS MAKE EACH DAY
...for a neighbor A SPECIAL DAY. BY JUST

...mine?
...mine?
...MY NEIGHBOR?

...talk about our
...they become
...welcoming,
...getting,



Why Mr. Rogers?

Anyone who knows me well knows how much I admire, respect, and dare I say, loved Mister Rogers.

You may be saying to yourself, “Okay, that’s great. Why?”

Because of all the great ways he made me feel special as a broken kid who had a lot of problems.

He liked me the way I was and reminded me, although I sometimes had great difficulty believing it to be true for me, that I made the day special by just being me.

Add to that the fact that he, like me, enjoyed wearing sweaters—the red sweater against a white dress shirt being my favorite.

Mr. Rogers had a unique and special way of making me feel that I mattered and that I was truly his neighbor.

The only other two people who had the ability to make me feel that way (at that time) was my best friend Ken, and my cousin, James.

That is the short version of why I loved, not just liked, Mister Rogers.

“Won’t you please, won’t you please, please won’t you be my neighbor?”

I Remember...

I remember always feeling angry...angry with myself, the world, my mother, the family, other people!

It isn’t how I wanted to feel, but the anger inside was like a leech attached to my soul and emotions, sucking out the good and leaving the bad.

Thank Divine Providence that my faith was strong, despite the fog of belief I carried in my heart—meaning, there was much I did not know or understand about being Roman Catholic.

I did not realize how much that anger wanted control until that day in my son’s bedroom when I saw it as it was and realized by the grace of God, if I did not let that anger go and walk with God, it would destroy me.

That is exactly what I did. My first response was to attend a Parish Mission at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church in Rowland Heights, California at the invitation of my mother. Best thing I ever did!

It was there that I learned a powerful lesson and truth—the truth about forgiveness and why we must forgive the wrong that others have done to us—and I did!

I can only pray that those family and neighbors I have wronged over the years, have, or will forgive me too.

Stop!

“Give it to
God and go
to sleep! It
isn't yours
to worry
about.”

carlosmichael.com



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Write and tell us what you think. Send us an email.
See you next month!

