

THE ADVENTURES OF A LIFETIME

January 24, 2013

I woke up in the middle of the night last night, out of a dream in which I had been looking at photos of myself in a deep sea diver's suit and piloting a jet plane. As I slowly gained awareness and came back to reality, I realized I had never done these things.

But, as I began to think more deeply about it, I realized my life had been filled with many adventures, many more than I usually think about. I have experienced a truly exciting life.

I have snorkeled six miles off shore in the Atlantic along a coral reef. I have swum in the middle of the Mon River right behind a paddle boat. I have water skied many times 14 miles the length of Youghogheny Dam and back on a single ski. I have snow skied a few times, ice skated many times and roller skated even more times, pretty decently at that.

I have hunted the farms and fields and hills of Pennsylvania for deer, rabbit and pheasant many, many times. I have ridden the deserts of Arizona on horseback for days on end. I have camped alone through the state parks of Pennsylvania, through the state of Michigan and Upper New York State along the Niagara River.

My teenage adventures mostly involved riding in speeding cars and hopping freight trains for short two mile journeys, hitch-hiking for needed transportation and just to pass the time, and helping overindulgent buddies sober up after parties where they drank too much beer.

I have thrilled at the rides at Kennywood Park all my life. I still enjoy the thrills of the coasters and the Skycoaster, the 200 foot cable drop in the park whenever I get a chance. I have enjoyed playing rounds of golf at courses around the country, most recently playing rounds of nine holes three or four times a week from spring till fall.

I have lived through the assassination of a U. S. president, the dropping of two atomic bombs, the scare of the meltdown of a nuclear plant with my sister's family living only a few short miles away. I have lived through the terror of 9/11 and its aftermath, and the threat of nuclear war off our coast in Cuba.

I attended Catholic high school in Braddock, PA. I attended college in Cincinnati, OH, St Vincent College in Latrobe, PA and Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA

I have said Mass on four continents, in an ancient church in the Holy Land, in a hotel room in London, on a 17 foot sail boat on the Chesapeake, at international Family life conventions with 100 children surrounding the altar. I have said Mass in Latin, in English, in Spanish at a Sunday parish Mass in Guadalajara, Mexico.

I have shared the excitement with Filipinos at a conference in Chicago while we watched the ratification of the new constitution of the Philippines nation on television after the fall of Marcos. I have marched in Pittsburgh, in New Kensington and in Washington D.C. in a snowstorm and in

summer heat, protesting two wars, and I have lain in the middle of Fifth Avenue in Oakland Pittsburgh in 9 degree weather protesting the beginning of another War in Iraq. I refused, for seven years, to pay 25% of my federal income taxes in protest of the Vietnam War.

I have participated in rallies in support of farm workers, janitors, women's and civil rights and the continuation of the poverty program. I have lain in the hallways of U.S. Senators in protest, met with U.S. congressmen, state legislators and township commissioners in support of or objecting to various programs and policies. I have written public letters to Catholic college presidents, protesting honorary degrees given to less than worthy recipients, and have received scathing abuse on the internet in response. I have stood on street corners in Wilksburg, chanting and protesting against drug dealers on summer evenings with dozens of other concerned citizens.

I have served as a delegate at a Democratic National Convention in Miami in 1972 committed to Senator George McGovern, and I campaigned diligently to get elected there and for the Senator in the general election, only to have him lose by a landslide. I sat up all night watching with smiles and tears the celebration of the election of our first black president, Barack Obama, and celebrated through his two inaugurations.

I have sat with hundreds of families, consoling them at the side of their dead loved ones. I have celebrated their funeral Masses, 1000 times at least. I have prepared 600 couples for marriage and celebrated their weddings, baptized several thousand babies, celebrated Mass over 24,000 times. I have attended 48 Metzler and Zentner family reunions, celebrating Mass at over half of them. I have sat with my Mennonite cousins in Lancaster PA planning the 275th celebration of the first Metzler coming to America in 1738.

I have attended International Family Life Conventions twice in Mexico, in Malta, Chicago and San Jose, California. I have toured Great Britain, Switzerland, the Holy Land, the American Rockies and the Florida Keys. I have attended national family life conferences in Erie and Pittsburgh, PA, Buffalo, NY, twice in Denver, CO, in Dubuque, Iowa, Cleveland and Oberlin, OH., and at least 15 conventions at Notre Dame and St. Mary's College, South Bend Indiana.

I have enjoyed the friendship of families of the four parishes I have served, Christian Family Movement friends in the U.S. and around the world, new-found friends in Switzerland and my many Pittsburgh family and newfound Mennonite relatives in Lancaster, PA.

I may not have piloted a jet plane, but I have flown in a small plane through the skies of Georgia, and flown in a light plane over two of my parish churches, my childhood home in Whitaker and twice over my summer cabin in Rural Valley.

At 75 years old, I hope the adventures of my life are not at an end, but that I may still have many adventures ahead for years to come. And I thank all who have shared these moments with me.

Father Warren Metzler