

Mayor Don Keil's Mayor's Message for August, 2015

Believe it or not, I was asked to preach a sermon for my church last Sunday. It really surprised me when Father Kevin Delaria, our priest at St. Andrew's Episcopal, asked me to preach, because I'm not a disciplined bible scholar.

Father Kevin sent me the scheduled readings well in advance so I could use them to formulate my remarks. I read the scripture selections several times, and decided that anything I came up with would probably sound contrived, or show some sort of forced piety that might not seem genuine. Parsing bible verses is not something I do well.

However, there was a phrase from Ephesians in the Epistle that kind of jumped out at me – "Put away from you all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and wrangling, and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another...". It sounds like St. Paul noticed the equivalent of Facebook and Twitter going on way back then! The only thing that's changed from then and now is the medium.

Since I didn't feel like preaching about the evils of Facebook, Twitter and malicious gossip, I just decided to talk about my personal relationship with God, and how it has sustained me, and guided my life through the years. I also talked about the spirituality of communities, and did a comparison using Seguin and another city in Texas.

Don't worry, I'm not going to get preachy and talk about myself. But I am going to talk about comparing Seguin with another city in Texas, as I did in my sermon. I'm not going to mention the name of the city, because this story would probably pop up when somebody from that city does a Google search, then we'd kick-start some kind of feud on Twitter and Facebook!

Last month, Marty and I visited some friends in this city, which shall remain nameless. We even got to meet the mayor. The city is just north of Dallas, and is one of the most affluent, fastest growing cities in the country. In less than 20 years, it has grown from a population of 2,000 to near 150,000. Average household income approaches six figures. Everything is perfect. Everything is bright, shiny, new, and clean. I didn't see a single pothole! Virtually every option in retail, restaurants and entertainment are all there.

But you know what? It has no soul. You can feel the emptiness.

Everyone there is from someplace else. No one there grew up with anybody else there. They have no traditions, no history, and no roots. Even the churches don't look like churches. As bright and shiny and attractive as everything is – it just feels empty. Like I said, it has no soul – just a lot of traffic.

I'm a capitalist, so I have to applaud what they did there. I want Seguin to grow as well, but not like that. Some people like living in that kind of atmosphere. But it isn't a place you can love like Seguin. Yes, I know we have torn up streets, detours, and dust. We have a lot of problems that will require even more detours and dust in the future.

We are also growing fast. We have many new and shiny things as well, and we will have many more in the future, but we will not lose our soul.

Seguin has a soul and a character that has been molded for nearly 2 centuries. Our town has a patina that brings out its soul. "Patina" is defined as that bit of wear or slight imperfection created by time and use that brings out the beauty and character of something.

Just go downtown, park your car and get out. Go stand in the middle of Central Park, look all around you, and you will feel it. You will feel that this town has a soul.

Also, when the Plaza Hotel opens, go up to the roof of that wonderful old building, and look out at the city below. You will see a beautiful green sea of treetops with church steeples popping up throughout the entire landscape as you look around. It is a glorious scene that shows how God has physically marked our beautiful city with His own hand.

Gosh I love this town!