

MINIMUM VERSUS OPTIMUM

(Pictures of Fr. Joe Anglim and Fr. Leo Mattecheck passed out)

We all have certain memories from our past that just don't go away. In fact, as time goes by they become more meaningful.

In my high school Father Joe was the Boy's Division Disciplinarian and taught Religion. Father Leo was the school Principal and also taught Religion. I had classes with both of them and they were terrific.

If you messed up, for example were late for class, you went on detention that day; detention was overseen by Father Joe.

There was a star athlete named Eddie who was on detention one day. Instead of picking up trash around the schoolyard, which was one of the detention projects, he purposely threw a piece of trash on the ground. Then he took off running like heck.

To the astonishment of those hanging around after school that day, of which I was one, Father Joe, complete with full length black cassock flying, took out after him and to my greater astonishment **CAUGHT HIM**. Eddie was meekly walked back to the schoolyard to pick up extra trash. After that day no one directly messed with Father Joe.

But Eddie wasn't quite done. One day in religion class (remember, this was the 60's and there were lots of rules) Father Joe was explaining the Mass and how everyone was obligated to go to Sunday Mass. Eddie asked, "What if you come into church right after the Confiteor, does it still count that you went to Mass?"

"Yes" Father Joe answered patiently.

"Well," Eddie said, "what about if you came in right after The Gloria, does it still count?"

"Look," said Father Joe, "it counts if you are there before the Gospel and don't leave until after Communion. But that is the **minimum** not the **optimum**. In life what really sets people apart is not if they are doing right or wrong but rather, are they doing the minimum or striving for the optimum."

To this day, I remember his words clearly. He was, of course, right.

Then there was a student named George who was in Father Leo's religion class. Father Leo was very delicately trying explain how to be morally safe on a date. The good priest said, "Generally, don't touch anything on the girl past her elbows."

George looked at him somewhat confused and said, "I don't understand Father, what's wrong with the wrists?"