

St. Francis de Sales Parish

All glory comes from daring to begin.

St. Francis de Sales



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A Man of Few Words

IN Grade 13, we had the choice between two English courses, either Prose or Poetry. The Poetry teacher was scary. He had wild artsy hair, a pretension British theatrical voice, and an eccentricity that bordered on insanity. He was my teacher for Grade 12 English and life in that classroom was always an adventure.

Tedium and monotony were not in his vocabulary, and his sometimes brutish, unorthodox style kept us always off balance and always on the edge, nervously excited bordering on petrified. It was an exhausting experience and I didn't think I could handle it two years in a row. I settled for Prose.

This would be my third year with this teacher and I was quite comfortable with the style. Other than the unit of Victorian novels which were just too long and draggy for my liking, it was a good year. There was also a unit in formal writing and creative writing. This was an era where spelling and grammar mattered. We were schooled to be communicative, to articulate our points and to enter into dialogue. I have no intention of celebrating that over the curriculum in the current school system. With all the modern technology that wasn't available to us, this generation of High School students have their own skills and ways of communicating.

In fact, I enlisted in Facebook so I could 'chat' with my nieces and nephews. (For those of you who have found me on Facebook, I do not frequent it except to drop a note or two to my nieces and nephews.) So at the completion of his Grade 10 High School exams, I got on Facebook and wrote to my nephew to see how the exams went. He has been working hard to up his grades from last year (it is amazing how a well placed threat can motivate) and I was curious how he found the exams. It took a couple of days to get his response, and it gave me pause to reflect on my own High School experience.

I couldn't help remember those lessons in Grade 13 Prose, about effective communicating, and how punctuation conveys emotion, and how sometimes terseness is better than verbosity, but I was unprepared for just how well versed my nephew has become with his own economy of words.

His reply was succinct and to the point. He replied, "ummmm, they were ok." Ah, the dulcet tones of a successful term.

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