

A neighborhood walk, our utensil drawer, puzzles, guacamole, and my newest pins (7 Quick Takes)

~1~



Last Saturday morning I took a walk with our fourth grader through our neighborhood.

He rode his bicycle, and I followed along behind, not even trying to keep up. I knew he would stop as we went along.

He pulled over at the Little Free Library and whenever a car was pulling out of its driveway. As we traveled the sidewalks together, he noticed everything. Maybe it's his sharp, young eyes, but I think he's particularly observant. I like pointing out our children's strengths as they try to figure out who they are.

Sometimes other people notice things in us that we don't notice about ourselves.

At one point, we were waiting for a car to pass when he spotted a tiny little butterfly, practically camouflaged into the bush it was sitting on. I love that God gives us each gifts to discover as life goes on. It makes me wonder what our little boy will grow up to be. But I'm not in any rush.

~2~

When we were picking tiles and countertops and paint colors for our kitchen renovation, one of the boys said, “Are people actually going to come just to see our kitchen?”



“No, no,” I said. “This is just for us. But we want it to look nice.”

But I was wrong. Friends and family do come just to see our kitchen—and it’s fantastic. The rest of the house might be disheveled, but the kitchen is sleek and shiny and new. There’s nothing like giving a tour of one room in your house, opening all the cabinets, and sliding out the utensil drawer.

Never in my life have I been excited about a utensil drawer, but here we are.

Now we just need to start inviting people over to feed them. But let’s not rush anything.

~3~



I came home from work one day to find our children doing a puzzle on the breakfast bar with their afterschool sitter.

They were hard at work, sorting and matching and trying to slip pieces together.

We do have other horizontal surfaces—really, we do—but apparently none are quite the right height the way the breakfast bar is.

Good thing we redid that kitchen.

~4~

And yes, the puzzle picture was really to show off the dancing avocado towels my parents brought as a kitchen-warming gift when they stopped by. You probably wanted to see a close-up shot, though, because who doesn't want a couple dancing avocado towels to spruce up their kitchen?



If we could go back in time, maybe we would design the kitchen around them. Or maybe we could have just gotten fun towels and skipped the whole renovation?

I don't know. It's amazing how much it has changed my life for the better. I never realized how hard it was to work in the smaller space and how often I would yell, "Stay away from the kitchen! I'm opening the oven!"

~5~



Speaking of avocados, I've decided that when in doubt about what to make for an occasion, you can't go wrong with guacamole and brownies. Or, at least, they're two things I know how to make.

I made some for an office party this week, and I was excited for a colleague who had never tasted guacamole before—and liked it. I know that there was a time in my life before I tasted guacamole, but I don't really remember the first time I experienced it.

It's just so delicious.

~6~

Our office party was to celebrate a colleague who is leaving us after five years to take a new position. I don't like goodbyes, so I don't think I'll dwell on that here.



On her last day, she came to me with two pins—a pickle and a bottle of ketchup. I love pins. I wear a different pin to work every day. I try to mix them up and choose pins that fit the theme of the day. The ketchup and pickle definitely expand my brooch collection. I was thrilled.

“I hope these make it into your quick takes,” she said.

And here they are.

~7~



At the start of every new academic year, Loyola University Maryland (where I work) celebrates the Mass of the Holy Spirit. It's a beautiful tradition, and the music is always so uplifting.

This year Archbishop William Lori celebrated the Mass, and at one point I found myself thinking about how the Holy Spirit has come to mean more to me over time. When I was in college, I'm not sure how often I thought to turn to the Holy Spirit—even though I certainly could have. Now, though, especially as a writer who

writes about faith sometimes, I often find myself turning to the Holy Spirit for wisdom and clarity and peace.

Especially as I prepare to begin teaching faith formation again this year, I need to remember to ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. This year I am teaching Pre-K, which will be a new experience. I am both excited and a little nervous.

Read more quick takes at Kelly's blog, This Ain't the Lyceum, and have a wonderful weekend!