

Hibachi fun, a surprise, sitters, finding a new hangout, and conference planning (7 Quick Takes)

~1~

For our younger son's Gotcha Day, we took him to a hibachi grill. He was excited to go, but then when we got there, all he wanted was a plate of fried rice.

His big brother asked to order the lobster and shrimp, and we hesitated, but since his little brother was just getting an inexpensive plate of rice...well...why not?

"How did you like the lobster?" I asked him after dinner.

"I don't know," he said. "Next time I'm just ordering rice."

Looks like our next trip to the hibachi grill will be a cheap one.

~2~

But the Gotcha Day celebrations aren't over—not even close. They're actually just getting underway. We received the most amazing surprise Gotcha Day gift from someone we didn't know. I'm still just so overwhelmed and touched and in awe of how it all happened. It's too much for a quick take. But I will write about it—definitely and absolutely and you'll all have a glimpse into this gift, which will be an experience I know we'll never forget.

More on that to come—and soon since it's happening next Thursday. I can't wait to tell you all of it...but I also want to give it the space it deserves. So hang on for a story that's coming soon to a blog near you!

Edited to add: I wrote about the surprise! You can read the whole story here.

~3~



We have been searching for an afterschool sitter for more than a month, and I think we've finally found the one. I feel an enormous sense of relief.

It's so funny because our last afterschool sitter we found in a weekend. After a negative experience, I pulled the children from an aftercare program on a Friday afternoon. I had no plan. I went onto care.com, interviewed our favorite (and she might have been the only one I actually talked to), hired her, and she started on Monday. She was like a member of our family, and our boys quote her and talk about her often.

This summer the process has not been as smooth, but I'm very hopeful that we have found another wonderful sitter. I love being able to expand our children's world with people who care about them and help them grow.

~4~

I also love that this summer for the first time we hired our 15-year-old rat-loving niece to babysit for a week.

Apparently it went fairly well. The first day when she told me she had stopped our older son from eating a fourth creamsicle, I knew she was a keeper. That is exactly our approach to summer. Please help yourself to a creamsicle, maybe a second one, and...well...OK, a third. But a fourth? Now you've gone a bit too far. Well...until your mom gets home and figures there's no real difference between three and four.

I wish summer never had to end. And I wish our New York cousins could stay for another week—please, pretty please, with a creamsicle on top?

~5~

Have you been to R. House? This week I went with colleagues for the first time, and we cranked through work projects, explored some of the 10 food vendors there, and enjoyed the beautiful sunlight as we worked. It's in Remington, and I was struck by how family-friendly it is.



The coffee was delicious, the schwarma I had was excellent, and I sort of regret not trying the unusual ice cream flavors. I hope they are serving watermelon chocolate chip when I take our boys there one day.

~6~

How do people shop for glasses? You go through an eye exam, and your eyes are all blurry and you're squinting in the light. Then you go try on glasses that have plain glass in them. You peer into mirrors, trying to figure out how the glasses look, but you just can't see. Not at all.

Then you order the glasses with a hope and a prayer.

I don't know yet how this story ends because I just ordered new glasses yesterday. I'll let you know.

~7~



Evangelization.”

I'm helping my friends Julie and Theresa plan a conference! If you are a Catholic woman who blogs or microblogs or shares your faith and life on social media or who creates something beautiful with words or another art form, I hope you will join us for “Beauty in Word & Art: Catholic Women Writers, Artists & Social Media Voices in the New

Annie Deddens (of Pray More Novenas and Catholic Wife, Catholic Life) and Colleen Duggan (author of *Good Enough Is Good Enough: Confessions of an Imperfect Catholic Mom*) are speaking, and we'll have Mass and conversation and food and fun. I can't wait!

We're gathering on Saturday, Oct. 13, at the Shrine of St. Anthony in Ellicott City, Md., which is absolutely lovely. You can find out more on our Facebook event page and register here.

You can read more quick takes on Kelly's blog, This Ain't the Lyceum.