

It's the little things

Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien is a man who carries much responsibility on his shoulders. He oversees an archdiocese encompassing nine counties and Baltimore City. He tends to a flock that worships in some 150 parishes. Yet in the midst of focusing on the future of Catholic schools, immigration rights, preventing sexual abuse and encouraging more vocations to the church, the priest of nearly 46 years paused during a Catholic Review board meeting last month to inquire, "Where is Pat Richardson?"

The friendly office manager of 16 years was, as it turns out, at the home of her parents recuperating from major back surgery.

The archbishop could have let that answer suffice and gone about his day. Instead, the former military chaplain obtained the number to Pat's parents and personally called to extend his wishes for a safe and quick recovery to the well-liked Catholic Review employee.

When Pat returned to the office this week, she was clearly tickled pink over the phone call.

As I caught up with the archbishop during a luncheon for the Women's Alliance of Partners in Excellence May 11, I told him how nice it was that he took the time to make that call.

"A phone call is a small thing, but it can mean so much," he said.

I have since learned that the archbishop also called another longtime employee who was fighting cancer. "If there's anything I can do, let me know," he said.

In a world consumed by technology, it's nice to have a "boss" who finds the time to make those important calls.



Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien (CR file)