

Teach your parents

Skepticism is in the eye of the beholder.

Just ask two Facebook friends who date to my sports-writing days.

It's been more than 20 years since Ted had enough of my finding fault with overachievers and labeled me a curmudgeon. Square that with Jim, whose laments about millennials having a sense of entitlement and not keeping appointments are ritually shouted down – by me.

My stock response: You need to encounter the kids with whom it is my pleasure to engage.

Take Sara Morales, a senior at The Catholic High School of Baltimore who will take her academic and athletic excellence to Notre Dame of Maryland University, where she will play soccer and lacrosse and major in elementary education.

Her current course load includes AP European history and honors apologetics, but what Sara really wants to do is help young children. Morales is already a leader of the youth group at St. Michael the Archangel in Overlea, where Darlene Hanley, her third- and fourth-grade teacher, inspired her to follow that calling.

A half-dozen times in the past year, inspiration has been found in the voices of John Paige and Kai Young, prominent in the **choir** from Cardinal Shehan School that has cast the Archdiocese of Baltimore in a very good light.

Spend time with John and Kai, and you find that seventh-graders well-versed in pop tunes can also appreciate the classics. Asked his favorite singer, Kai answered: Michael Jackson. John, the one who famously said on Good Morning America last year, “The peace you see is the Jesus in me,” wants to go to Calvert Hall and play the guitar like Jimi Hendrix.

It's not just the kids I meet on the job who fill my spirit and give me hope. Sit down and spend some time with the young attorneys, NICU nurses, police officers, teachers and blue-collar laborers found among my extended family and friends, and

you would feel the same.

Mid-September took me back to St. Rose of Lima in Brooklyn, the parish of my childhood, for the funeral Mass of Stella Stumpf, whose adult children are among my best friends. The liturgy included a wonderful homily from Father Mike Orchik, her former pastor, that leaned heavily on their shared Polish heritage.

At Holy Cross Cemetery, after he sprinkled dirt from Poland on her casket, a hundred or so mourners sang along to “Teach Your Children,” a Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young anthem from 1970. Miss Stella liked its melody and message, that children can teach their parents, “and feed them on your dreams.”

I do not wear rose-colored glasses, and understand that there are countless teens, as well as 20- and 30-somethings, who are lost. From my perspective, however, the numbskull ratio is no greater today than when I was in their shoes.

From the Catholic Church to higher education to the Baltimore City Police Department to every branch of the federal government, bedrock institutions are being scrutinized for their possible crimes and sins.

From the environment to the opioid epidemic, man’s greed has conspired to foul God’s creation.

Members of my generation were complicit in making those messes. It will be up to the next one to accelerate the clean-up.

I have faith that they will.