

## Pastor's Column

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### "The Gatekeeper"

I have a small home in the desert. It will be where I retire when the time comes. The home is in a small, gated golf community.

About two weekends a month, after Sunday Masses, I make the 90 mile drive to my "get-a-way." It is my place of retreat and quiet and where I do most of my writing.

There are two "gatekeepers" there, on duty at different times. One gatekeeper sits in the little booth at the entrance of the community, and as the cars approach to get in, he continues to read his newspaper or occupy himself with whatever it is that keeps him busy.

Each driver must roll down his or her window, use the personal card key that, in turn, opens the gate. He doesn't look up to see who is coming and offers no sign of greeting.

The other "gatekeeper," when he is on duty, sees you coming from afar, like the father of the prodigal son. He leaves his desk, stands by the window, recognizes the car and its occupant as a friend and resident, and opens the gate.

I do not have to roll down my window and use the key card. As I go through the gate, he smiles, waves, and he yells out "Welcome."

This man makes my day! He understands that sitting in that booth is not just a job, it is a ministry. His sitting in that booth is not just about drawing a paycheck; it is about making a better world.

Each time that he is on duty, and I pass by, he creates a better world for me. His welcome, his hospitality, his recognition of me changes my day for the better. What he does for me, I know that he does for others.

That's how the world changes for the better, not in the big things, but in the little things, in the details.

That "gatekeeper" is my inspiration. What he does for me, I attempt to do for others.

Inspiration is elusive. When you see it, recognize it, applaud it, grab hold of it, and then share it with others!

*F. n. Mike*