

Jake, Our Godson

Our Godson, Jake was born of a Jewish father and an Italian Catholic mother. His grandparents were also Italian Catholics. Jake's parents, Sonny and Maria, were married in a double ceremony (Catholic & Jewish), but Jake was to be raised a Catholic. So, it was fitting that he was christened in a Catholic church. After the ceremony and mass were over, people were filing past the proud parents. I was close by and overheard one elderly lady saying to another "Goldsmith? That doesn't sound Catholic!"

Jake was still a toddler when the four of us (Sonny didn't attend services) were in the back of the church, lost in our own thoughts. During Catholic services one stands and one sits, a process repeated many times, only to be interrupted by the occasional hymn. There is a separate book that contains these hymns, each of them associated with a unique number. For those who want to sing along using the hymn book, that Sunday's selection of hymns are posted on the wall next to the altar.

Jake was always a fast learner, a talent he demonstrated readily, as you'll see. We just stood up for the umpteenth time in complete silence when Jake blurted out in a voice he inherited from his grandmother and mother: "One more song and we're outta here!" Predictably, much laughter followed.

We were at Sonny and Maria's house one night when I popped in my new Pete Fountain CD. The first song was very up-beat, fast, and rhythmic, so, as I held Jake in my arms I was dancing to the music, bouncing Jake, much to his delight. The song ended and the second track was A Closer Walk with Thee, a song sung at funerals in New Orleans, so it is very slow and methodical. Jake started to cry and no matter what I did he continued to shed tears. I got an idea and started the album over. As soon as the first music started the tear dried up and he was smiling again.