

GLIMPSE

Be-living

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During a question and answer session after a recent retreat presentation, a fellow asked me the difference between faith and believing. Faith in one sense is a virtue, but it is also an orientation or a set of teachings. Believing is how one lives that set of teachings and that virtue. I am sure there are other descriptions, but it seemed to satisfy the retreatant.

It seems to me that believing really is be-living. Be-living might be how we live our acceptance of what of God we can understand. Maybe faith is how we look at life without understanding God as much as we would wish. I love reflecting through my memories upon those who have most influenced, not just my life, but more, the way I live, act, reveal myself. I think that, more than we know, we all be-live by how others lived. We are formed as well by the negative way others lived around us. "We don't want to be-live like him/her/them."

We have a faith in God. Our God has more than one model of how each of us is to be. Thank You, God, for that! There were six siblings in my family and by our lives, you would never know we were from the same family, from the same parents. My older sister is a retired teacher, but her adult-children would not say she really ever retired. She was the Responsible Child helping our mother raise us all in the early years. The brother right after me has two doctorates, got all the brains in the family and is wired for mental and exciting action.

The next brother has gone to God and left behind memories in the hearts of many of his humor, acting ability, creativity and love of his Irish roots. The brother after is easiest-of-going among us all. He is tallest and biggest of heart. He be-lives by be-loving the most hurt lost and separated. Ah, yes, then the "little sister" who remains as spoiled as ever she was in her early years. She is a survivor, having lost her husband to cancer and raising five children. She is the warrior, the most determined and quite beloved.

Who influenced them is their personal history of family, friendships, injuries, disappointments and success. Who touched us makes a great prayer-time. Some of the same people who formed my siblings formed me, but there have been and are others who particularized God creation of each of us in that one family. All my siblings have had their faith-journeys landing them in the Church, but their living the one Faith has been and is being lived differently.

Maybe Faith is located in the head and believing is in the heart and be-living is everywhere our head and heart reveal, touch and love others. If we are most formed by the people of our lives, then that is how God gets close enough to us so as to create us every moment, without our noticing it until we take the time to accept.

It is only a glimpse, be-living is more than believing.