

## GLIMPSE

### Polishing Up

Fr. Larry Gillick, S.J.

My mother had a tea set of silver resting in a shallow silver plate with frilly tooling around the edge. Each Saturday morning we had to use a gritty Silver Dust polish to get rid of the unshininess which just seemed to happen as it rested on the sideboard all week, because nobody drank tea. The creamer, sugar bowl and a tall tea pot seemed more decorative than useful, but we polished it diligently, because it was Saturday and "she said so."

This past summer I moved from our small community house back here to Creighton University. Moves are hard, but good. I found a number of lost items, but many things which I had thought were essential I hadn't used for any time during the thirteen years I lived there. These essentials had lost their necessity I supposed. Out went greeting cards, letters, unlit candles, a pair of old and unhealthy shoes. I had cherished so many things upon receiving them, but alas, time dulled their value and preciousness. I did have my grandmother's Deputy Sheriff badge which she wore when on duty, but guided us six grandchildren as if duty were never-ending. I saved the little bottle of sand my brother brought me from Omaha Beach in Normandy France. I packed my father's old shaving mug from which he would lather up his face every morning to our delight. It is now delighting me with my morning's tea during prayer-time.

As I look around my new room now I realize that I saved those *things* which are more than *things*. I have kept not *things*, but relational sacraments. They tell me, remind me, invite me to celebrate my mother, grandmother, my dad, my brother and those persons who have made me the person I am. I have brought my self in its many forms and they keep giving me a me easily forgotten, easily discarded self. They are saying in their various voices, "do this, receive this in memory of who we have told you who you are." Here is a helicopter from John, now gone, a rabbit's furry skin from Bernadette, still here, and a Green Bay Packer prayer-shawl made by the women from St. Leo's Parish where I have said Sunday mass for twenty-three years. They gave it to me the night before a heart bypass surgery and I am

still here too. My roomful welcomes me back to my self and these things invite me backwards to live forwards as loved, valued and shareable. True gifts are given to each of us to present us with our being likewise gifts to be distributed.

The old teapot, still shining in one of my siblings homes, never had tea, but its usefulness was a reminder to my parents of a day of love which never ended, though, like the teapot it needed polishing often. Practical is one form of value. Relationships are not valuable, because they are useful, they can be as old as the Omaha Beach sand and yet as present now as the day my brother told me that he had been thinking of me and my interests in D-Day while he was actually walking on that once-war strand. Value and preciousness is what the giver gives to the receiver though it is nothing more than wax, or cloth, or tin. These gifts keep on giving us, the receivers, ourselves. It is good to move I guess, if only to find out what needs to be received again. It is only a glimpse. Keep on polishing.