

GLIMPSE

The Rules

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There were many rules surrounding our behavior at the time I entered the Jesuits, most of which we found humorous. We were not to look into the eyes of our Superiors, but rather at a point slightly above their noses. We were not to cross our ankles while we were sitting, so we crossed our ankles while standing. Much fun was derived by figuring out how to get around these rules without actually breaking them. Keeping the rules was stressed more than keeping the spirit of them.

There was a practice called "Modesty of the Eyes". We were to keep our eyes cast down and especially do not glare, stare, gawk, or look at anybody's body, especially females of the opposite sex. Seeing that there were not many of them around it was easy to observe by not observing. There was also one practice that did make sense in a way; "Modesty of the Ears".

If there were a loud noise, which would naturally stimulate a quick reaction, we were to regard it, not as a surprise or distraction. Nothing was to uncenter our attentiveness. We were learning the difference between reacting and responding. We were learning as well not to be "nosey" and overly interested in the unimportant or what was none of our business. We were encouraged to be centered without being self-centered, not an easy style of life.

We have all been told at one time or other not to take things so personally. That might be called "Modesty of the Heart" which is a dangerous and isolating way to spend ones time on earth. Our days are

spent watching for and listening to what is offered for our responding. Not nosey, no, but being available to what reaches our hearts is a great immodesty and defenseless way of delighting in responding, personally, because everything is charged with the personal noise-making, sight-seeing of the very personal God.

Staring, eves-dropping, prying, needing to always be on the inside are all forms of immodesty of the senses. There is the dangerous practice of "rubber-necking". This occurs when an accident happens involving autos and those not involved uncenter themselves from their own driving to nosey themselves into somebody else's business. Being receptive, self-attentive, awake to how we are with ourselves is modesty about which there are no rules, just a taking care for what is within and what is around. Self-awareness allows for other-awareness, but not as objects for control, but for relationships.

Did I tell you of the rule about not speaking unkindly about Superiors? That made keeping silence quite easy. What else would we talk about? It is only a glimpse.