

## GLIMPSE

### Going Places

Fr. Larry Gillick, S.J.

Shakespeare wrote about how all of life is a stage. I had two major acting positions in my brief career. I was the First Witch in Macbeth, and ended my stage career by playing the female lead in an original musical we young Jesuits did as a summer-vacation activity. Ah yes, Marie from Savannah, a lovely rotund southern belle who sang two rollicking numbers accompanied by carefully-choreographed, hoopskirt flouncing, bouncing dance numbers. "From Waycross to Macon, I had the boys ashakin', I'm Marie from Savana that's me!"

In his play, "As You Like It" in Act II Scene VII, Shakespeare, after saying "*All the world's a stage,*" poses "*all the men and women merely players.*" They have their exits and their entrances. As we say about Will, "He had a kind of way with words all right." I had a tremendous entrance for my lead-role. Escorted by my well-dressed servant I descended a long staircase in all my glory. At the end of the play I stepped toward the audience, bended one knee and with arms out-stretched finished my last number in high falsetto crescendo. It was my finest hour, having learned about entrances and exits and all in-between.

We all have many comings and goings, enterings and exitings, and there are ways to learn how to do them with grace in our little plays of life. There is a way of just up and leaving one space with preoccupation about the next place. The dis-grace is the disregard for what and whom the person leaving has left behind. There is no looking around and about. There is a greater concentration on the door than what is and was behind. There might be a quick "Thank you" or "It's been nice", but, being left like that, I feel like saying in an injured response, "For what!"

The probability is that the next place or encounter for this person will be impersonal and unreceptive, like the former. Life then is nothing more than a stage and Will was right, we are actors briefly strutting our stuff and from another play, "signifying nothing." The whole thing is to "*Keep grace that keeps all our goings*

graces." (G. M. Hopkins, S.J.) I have been learning that Grace keeps me going so that my goings will be Graces.

The gracious exit begins with our being aware of what has been going on, what has been received and given. How have we been graced? Then we reflect how we have been blessings, a light, a smile, a grace in this space. We are less obsessed with "what's next" so that we can be freer not for "What's next!" but for "What is next for us to give life, care, healing, resolution." The likelihood is that how we exit will be how we enter. How we will be in the next is influenced highly by how we were present during and exiting from the last. It is very personal and graceful when exiting, to look around, check your space, sense the atmosphere, take the temperature around you and within.

I am about to exit with not much of a flourish and not on a bended knee. I have enjoyed my time with you and I hope you have enjoyed your time with yourself. We are more than mere actors; we are agents of life, love, and blessing. It is only a glimpse, go and come, as you like it.