

GLIMPSE

Doughnuts

Fr. Larry Gillick, S.J.

I grew up in the Polish neighborhood on the south side of Milwaukee. It was so Polish that at school I was named Larrski and my friends were Bobski, Bettski, Judski and (of all things) Kevinski. I learned many non-Irish traditions and one I especially loved.

In eighth grade we were allowed to go one-half block off the playground during recess to purchase Polish pastries known as Shnecks. They are doughnuts whose holes are filled with jelly, so they are also known as Jellyfills. Irish doughnuts have holes! They can be sprinkled with inviting sugars, nuts, caramel, chocolate, or just powdered sugar. For all these invitations to delight, the hole remained. The Polish folks had and have it right. No disappointments exist during the devouring.

We, by nature, long for the full, the jelly. Disappointments are to be avoided, like spring pot-holes in the street. Advertisers know this about us and promise that their products will fill us up and never let us down. Here's a happy, but sad fact. Everything will let us down when compared to our lofty expectations and desires. Everything has some-kind of hole. The "whole" is not ours to have. The hole-liness of things is exactly how creation keeps us reaching, searching, and desiring the Whole of God.

Holiness has more to do with our reception of the empty, the hole, the disappointing and the inviting. Allowing a thing to be what it is and what it isn't, is reverence by being respectful for its being just what it is, a creature. This creature has its limitations, its holes, its finitude, its hole-liness. A silver butter knife is meant to gently spread butter on bread. It is not to be reverently misused as a screwdriver or pry-bar. Usually, when we misuse an object it breaks along the lines of its holes, its limitations and then we are doubly disappointed.

Often we hear ourselves and others say that a movie, book, party, relationship was "pretty good" or "okay" or "fairly well". Yes, beauty or anything else is always in the eye of the beholder. What's in the eye or rather behind the eye of the beholder? The mind behind is looking for the whole beyond!

In his poem *Non Dum*, G. M. Hopkins, S.J. writes about the "Not Yet" in everything. He ponders that he can see the gifts all right, "but not the hand that wrought

them all." Everything and everyone has its built-in "appointment" which is stable, solid, meant, by its very nature, to be a "dis-appointment". The "appointment" is to be what it is and nothing more despite the eye that wants it to be more than "okay", "pretty" or "fairly". Each of us is appointed to be a disappointment then. Accepting this holiness in ourselves is where we meet grace and others meet that same grace in meeting us even when we are just "good".

Maybe I have written too much gone on too long, because I desire completeness and I know the reader wishes that too. I want to be all. So be pretty good and enjoy the doughnuts of life. It is "only" a glimpse, kind of.