

## GLIMPSE

### Farm Stand

Fr. Larry Gillick, S.J.

"Are we there yet?" is an ancient complaint/question most parents have endured more than a few times. Eventually, in my family of origin, there were six potential complainers. Each August all eight of us headed to northern Wisconsin for our four-week vacation. Our elongated black 1951 Chrysler funeral car had large bucket seats which were pulled up and out from behind the front seats. There was room for the driver, the mother, usually with baby or small child on her lap. The large trunk held most of the fishing equipment, suit cases and bedding.

There were, at that time, no interstates so the 289 mile trip took about eight hours, having several diaper-stops, plus lunch. The passing farm-fields grew tiresome, but the promise of our baptisms in the waters of White Sand Lake kept us occupied with counting out-of-state licenses and different-colored barns.

The excitement of our approaching the lake was dulled by an annual occurrence. As the Black Mariah crawled its way at ten miles a gallon, my father would pull off the road to purchase at roadside stands, corn, potatoes, melons, tomatoes, did I mention corn? He piled the vegetables on our sweaty laps and filled in any little spaces available. Did I mention the corn? We were set for good eatings if we could survive the last two hours breathing through the moveable corn fields now increasing the sweatitude in the back two rows.

Ah, but upon arrival, before de-sweating in the lake, there was the unpacking of everything including the vegetation which, by that time, was all over the travelers, except the three in the front row. After that process, we had answered the question about the time of arrival.

In the Spiritual Life, we are very interested in our progress. When will we arrive? It is a complaint/question arising from our ego's desire for affirmation based on location. We want to ask the driver how we are doing, at what rung of the heavenly ladder we have arrived. The spiritual scenery may have grown boring, same bumps, same pot holes, same relational struggles with my partners in the second or third rows. We really do want

validation and perhaps approval that progress, movement, accomplishment is ours. As it is said often, "There is no there, there!"

Things do get dumped on our laps and breathing can seem to be just existing. "That" we are doing is more important and spiritual than the "why" of the doing. Holiness or the Spiritual Life is received, not achieved. Jesus never told His followers how they were doing; He would tell them a story of some kind for their encouragement rather than their affirmation. Relationships are not to be measured or evaluated. Their mysteries are waiting for further revelation and evaluating literally would mean taking away the real value of the intimacy.

My father and mother knew where we were, right with them and that was the important thing. Our collective behavior was of more than somewhat interest to them, that was for sure. We knew where we were and we didn't like it until the sign for Lac du Flambeau announced the long-awaited arrival.

One more thing, yes we did return back home after the four weeks and yes, the closer we got to our house, the more the car filled up with even more of the early-autumn's abundant harvest. Did I mention the corn?

It is just a glimpse.