

GLIMPSE

Shining a Light

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I live in what is known as, "a fly-over state". Many planes a day cross over what appears to be a quite flat and uninteresting area. Some flights do land at our airports, but actually most planes could land anywhere out on the expansive farm fields of Nebraska. As for being flat, as one drives from the eastern border toward the west and the mountains, one is actually going to cross the western border of Nebraska almost a mile higher than the eastern. Gas-mileage will reveal that inclination.

As you draw nearer to the Rockies the vista is quite beautiful. Snow lies gently on the shoulders of those huge mountains who puff their chests in attractive majesty. Amazing beauty from a distance, but the closer one gets, the rocks are sharper, the air thinner, the paths steeper, and the distances longer. Those in the fly-over flights can have a limited experience of the beauty below. Interstate drivers have time to reflect from their comfort- mobiles. As it has been said, "The earth is kind of hard when you come right down to it."

Distance from something or someone allows for incorrectnesses, such as prejudices, dislikes, stereotypes and other false judgments. Getting closer, allows for increased accuracy and knowledge leading to acceptance. With God, how do we get close enough? It seems that as human beings get closer to the ideal, to the perfect, to the Jesus of the Gospels, we receive Jesus more deeply and judge ourselves more critically.

I am privileged to accompany couples through their marriage preparation. Through the use of an instrument, the FOCCUS, they get to know each other by sharing the ways they have answered a long string of questions about their view of themselves and each other. They intensify their awareness of each other and grow more loving. They see the real and their love becomes more real. That love then is asked to be accepted as offered by the other who knows more of the real selfishness, arrogance, fears and shame of the other.

Now for this Close-up and Personal God, what's the problem? It does seem that as a person gets closer to God, the worse she/he feels about the self. Sometimes I muse that this is why Catholics tend to sit in the back of church. Jesus, as the Light, can be seen as having a tensor lamp, shining spot on what we judge as bad. He's looking right at what I am holding onto and He then is like the detective who, coming upon the robber, says, "Drop it!" Jesus is not a flashlight-focusing Finder.

Religion, spirituality, faith are not businesses based on clean-up-the-trash. As with the pre-marriage couples, the closer we let Jesus see us and we see ourselves being seen, well, we will look better, because of the relationship Jesus initiates and sustains. We will never find Jesus anywhere except in His finding us and we find ourselves being found. We can be overly concerned about how we look. Our spirituality concerns itself with how we are looked at! It is just a glimpse, enjoy the view.