

GLIMPSE

Small Steps

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This Saturday we will have our "stepping" or "grad"uation ceremonies here at Creighton University. In the past months students have been trying to make absolutely sure that their next steps will be sure to end in a sure-winner choice. Success, satisfaction, happiness, benefits, advancement and personal growth are all equal in importance. Some have come to visit with me asking whether they could "discern" with me for ten minutes or so. That leaves me with at least an interior smile, which most times breaks into my face. If I told them I had a crystal ball that really works, they'd line up down the hall and out the door. They mistake "discernment" with "strategizing". They usually have listed pros and cons which also usually leaves them with equally long lists of both. Most around this Catholic, Jesuit University are interested in what God wishes, wills, and has in mind, wants. Most grind their minds down to a sharp point, hope God isn't feeling too left out and that God will kind of give it the divine okay someday. Most have an idea that God has a plan, but isn't letting that plan out and so they splash and fumble around in some kind of anxious deciding.

One of my favorite little sayings is that God will never give us a something which will make God obsolete. God's will is to love us in the events of our lives so that we can trust that Love when we have to take "steps". So God wants us to trust! Trusting God is how we relate with, respond to, and try to love God in return. Discernment does not end with a decision, not really. Discernment continues as the decider watches how that love of God takes shape. So discernment continues into the future. We "step" out into the mystery of how God is going to love us into the next "step".

What is so humbly necessary is that we first have to find out about our fears in taking "steps". Honesty, about what makes trusting so difficult in our daily living, helps locate how and why trusting God takes so much faith and hope. Discernment is a messy business and takes longer than ten minutes. It is a life-style of self-awareness and grace-attentiveness.

There is a "heel-scuffer" in our little community and I have learned to know who is coming down the hallway, just by being attentive to his casual gate. The kitchen is right below my room and I can tell who's there by the amount of noise they are making while making breakfast or preparing a snack. Discernment is made a little bit easier by our being alert, sensitive, listening, and available to what touches us, what attracts or distracts our spirits. God is not playing with us, but praying within and around us to draw our attention to how God loves us personally and how God does not want to be obsolete or put out of business by our cleverness. It is only a glimpse, step gracefully.