

# Along the track

## Grace

French poet and mystic Simone Weil wrote that:  
*Grace is like little sparks, the little explosions within the world of gravity that invite us to repay war with peace, fire with water, hatred with love.*

It's a good attempt to try to describe the indescribable. The Catechism makes this attempt:  
*Grace is favour, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to God's call to become children of God, adoptive daughters and sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life.*  
CCC 1996

Wow! That's worth reading again... and again and again. Grace is an extraordinary gift. We don't earn it or deserve it but we certainly need it. We live more deeply because of it. So often we find it where we do not expect to, in the paradoxes of life – in joy and in suffering, in sadness and grief, in pain and pleasure. Somewhere in all that we are inspired to endure, to rejoice, to show courage, to be inspired and inspiring, to turn away or to commit, to empathise and sympathise. These are moments of grace. Sometimes memories of loved ones may inspire us or memories of hurt and pain. Moments of grace may come when we listen to the messages that lie within those memories. There are little moments that catch you off guard, the beauty of the sunset or even the sunrise if you are up that early, tears in a film, or someone who calls to see if you are OK, or perhaps a child comes up and gives you a picture he or she drew. Too often we go looking for a momentous miracle and God's grace is in action right under our noses.

When become sensitive to those moments, we cultivate grace, as it were.

Some years ago, I attended worship in one of the many Pentecostal churches where I lived. One part of the ceremony was called "The Testimony of Miracles."

Initially I was very apprehensive about this section of the ceremony, yet I subsequently found it to be both moving and inspiring. In simple terms, we prayed in silence to recall the miracle of God's action through Jesus Christ in our lives. This period of silence was quite long and, surprisingly, even the children remain quiet. Then, in small groups each person was asked to give testimony

to the wonders God, through Jesus had wrought in her or his life over the last seven days, from the small and seemingly inconsequential occurrence to what for some was dramatic and life-changing. All experiences were valued, acknowledged and were a cause for praise to the Creator. Each small group gave thanks for the wonders of the action of God in each of our lives. This section concluded when all were called to assemble again and some of these experiences were shared with the total congregation.

The testimony of Miracles was a skillful combination of quiet prayer, contemplation and reflection. In some ways it reminded me of our nightly prayer before the evening meal when I was young. Our father used to ask us, 'what was the best thing that happened to you today?' We all had to have something to say, something to add. Then he would simply say, 'well we all have a lot to thank God for', and then we would begin the meal.

Of course grace comes in times of worship and prayer but if we leave it for those times only, we miss out on the daily treasures God makes available. Creating quiet oases to escape the noise and frantic pace of life is admirable but not always practical. Finding a moment to be more appreciative of others, of their love and generosity, their uniqueness, to appreciate the delight of children and how they see the world, to be aware of the small kindnesses we receive every day, and the challenges, to appreciate the weather (it is different every day), the sights we often become so familiar with that we lose the wonder of their beauty. Sensitising ourselves to the wonders of everyday life also sensitises us to the daily wonders of God's gift of grace.

God offers thousands of sparks of grace each day. All that is asked of us is to be being willing to show up with an open mind and heart, to the moment at hand. These sparks of grace also remind us that we too can be moments of grace for others. If we choose to be.

Regards  
Jim Quillinan

Email: [jquillinan@dcsi.net.au](mailto:jquillinan@dcsi.net.au)