



30 August 2009

**We have no distant God, but one who is close, who is flesh, who is
where we are.**

—Karl Rahner SJ

These words came to mind as I reflected on our 1st Reading from Deuteronomy during this 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time as Moses speaks of God being “so close...to us whenever we call upon him.”

This coming Monday, our parish school begins another academic year. And we will begin it by blessing the doors of the school. I do this so that our students might learn to be more aware of God who is “so close to us”; who is with us in all our comings and goings.

God is so close to us. I believe we sense that reality through our friends at times. I just returned from Virginia where I spent time with five of my classmates. We spent several days at Smith Mountain Lake where we read, prayed, prepared meals together, laughed and reminisced. And we had access to a boat and Jet Ski. I was even pulled behind the boat holding onto what is called a “screamer”. It was quite an experience as I held on for dear life!

Out of the 46 classmates, these five were some of my closest friends during my 4 years in Rome. One is presently pastor in Buffalo, NY; another is pastor in Manhattan, NY after teaching high school and coaching basketball for 20 years; one is a pastor on Long Island, NY who will soon begin a sabbatical to complete his doctorate in scripture; another is pastor of a large parish in Roanoke, VA; and a priest from Oklahoma who is now the Bishop of Little Rock, AK. All these with yours truly who made fruitcake for 17 years in a Trappist Monastery in Oregon!

What I sensed in that time together was something ‘of God’. And I found myself completely grateful for these long-time and distant friends of mine and what they’ve given me over the years by their presence.

Of course, I read a few things. And I would recommend the following, all very worthwhile:

- **The Zookeeper’s Wife** by Diane Ackerman (a WWII war story);
- **The Worst Hard Time** by Timothy Egan (story on the Dust Bowl)
- **Time for God** by Jacques Philippe (a book on prayer)

May we trust that in God—who is close, who is flesh, who is where we are—there is no distance.

Fa. Tim Clark

Pastor