



Inspired By Others

Father Tom McGettrick

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Fifty years ago, I was a student at St. Peter's Seminary in Ireland. That was the time when seminarians received a daily diet of good theology and bad food. During my years in the major seminary, I spent my summers on the coast of Ireland working at a camp for orphan boys. It was a good experience.

Each night after all the campers went to bed, I used to go alone to the beach and have a long walk. It was a special time. I used to look out over the ocean and think of my future ministry in America. I would dream of all the good things I would accomplish and the thousands of people whose lives I hoped to touch. I would return to the camp full of excitement thinking that what I was doing then was nothing to what lay in my future. The Bible tells us that “ young men dream dreams ” and in those days I was certainly dreaming.

Fifty years later, I am now on the beach again but on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. In what will likely be my last assignment on this earth — I am now in my seventies — I live on the Texas coast. I begin each day with a long walk on the beach as the sun is rising. My mind frequently goes back to those early years when I looked across the ocean from the other side. In reflecting upon the intervening years, it has come as something of a surprise to me that I do not seem to give as much time to thinking about what I have done as to what others have done to me and for me. With regard to what I have accomplished, I will leave to God and others to judge. What is uppermost in my own mind is what I have received. No doubt I have learned something from all the organized functions I have attended; retreats, workshops, sabbaticals, lectures etc. However, the greatest growth in my life has come from people who — in most cases — do not even know the impact they had on my life. It may have been something they did or something they said which enriched my life, sometimes in a significant way.

The purpose of this book is to share some of these incidents. We have often heard people say that they have one hundred and one reasons to be thankful. This book gives one hundred and one incidents for which I am thankful. Most are anecdotes about people to whom I owe so much. Interspersed with these anecdotes are passages from the Bible or great writings, which also inspired and continue to inspire me.

The book has another purpose. Just as I have been enriched, nourished and inspired by others we should always be aware that, while in the presence of others, something may be said or done which can have a profound affect on our lives. Likewise, it can be a positive motivator for us to be sensitive to the truth that what we say and do may greatly enrich the lives of others. Should that happen, the time and effort put into writing this book would have been worthwhile.

Tom McGettrick is a priest of the Diocese of Corpus Christi, Texas. Born in Ireland, he is the second of fifteen children. He has lived in Texas since his ordination in 1956, apart from three years spent as missionary in Mexico. He holds a Masters Degree in Education from Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio and a Masters Degree in Psychology from St. Mary's University in San Antonio. His hobbies are reading, golf, tennis, and walking.

Father McGettrick is currently the Vicar for Priests in the Diocese of Corpus Christi and the pastor of St. Andrew by the Sea Parish on Padre Island.

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