

H A R L A N R I C H A R D S

November 28, 2012

Snowy Miracles

Snow is something many of us take for granted, even complain about, but for millions of people who grew up and spent their lives south of the snow belt it is a miracle. As I was walking to the gym I overheard a guy describing how he had never seen it snowing until he came to Stanley in 2010. His only prior experience with snow was seeing it already on the ground when his family passed through the Rocky Mountains.

If we as a society did not understand and be regularly exposed to the process which causes snow, we would be in awe of such a profound miracle as frozen water flakes falling out of the sky. Many natural occurrences must have seemed supernatural to our ancestors who did not understand what was going on. It is no wonder they sought safety in religious rites intended to protect them from the vagaries of natural phenomena.

We still have miracles in our lives, unexplained situations which derive unexpected (but hoped for) benefits. When we pray for a specific outcome and it occurs, we thank God. Often, if the outcome is highly unlikely and confers a great benefit, it is deemed miraculous. Maybe having our prayers answered in the affirmative, even though perceived as miraculous, are merely natural phenomena whose laws we have not yet discovered.

But would understanding the process behind the outcome make it any less miraculous? It shouldn't, yet familiarity breeds contempt and once we can see behind the curtain (as Dorothy did in Oz) the wonder and awe disappears. We become inured to the sacred character of the experience and take it for granted. We lose our fascination for, and delight in, living.

I think this is what Jesus meant when he said we must be as little children - to keep our sense of wonder at the miracles occurring daily in our lives. Falling in love and experiencing the joy and elation that comes with it is another miracle we take for granted. So many people fall in love that unless you happen to be one of those who are blissfully floating on cloud 9 over that special someone, it is no big deal. A mother's love for her child is a miraculous gift as well even though scientists have reduced it to an hormonal equation.

Don't ever lose your sense of wonder.
Don't ever let the miracles in your life become ho-hum.
Don't ever stop basking in the light and the love of the Holy Spirit.