



# Fanning The Flame

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## Chapter 2: God Comes To Meet Us

### *Nugget*

Oh so many years ago God came to meet our first parents. God then came to meet Abraham, Moses, the prophets, Mary and the early apostles and disciples who walked with Jesus. Each of these people said 'yes' to a God they could not see, sometimes hesitantly, but ultimately willingly. This very same God comes to meet each of us today, in January 2012. Like those who came before us, we also must choose how we will respond when God comes calling.

### *Quick Reflection*

The story is told of a blind young man selling his wares at a busy intersection inside Chicago's Union Station. Running to catch a train, a person bumped into the young man, who fell into his table and sent all of his wares tumbling onto the floor. The young man found himself in a state of chaos. He got down on his hands and knees and feverishly began feeling for and gathering his items as quickly as he could. But many continued to rush by him so as not to miss their trains, and the young man's goods and papers became even more scattered. In time, a person recognized his distress and bent down to assist him. Knowing he might miss his own train, he not only helped the young man pick up all of his items, he also set them back up in an orderly fashion. When all was done and the stranger was quietly departing, the young man cried out after him: "Hey Mister, are you Jesus?"

As a good friend of mine says, "Sometimes you just need Jesus with skin on."

Our faith tells us that we become a member of the body of Christ when we are baptized. We become a part of a community of believers to which we are connected forever. As members of this body of Christ, we are Jesus to each other. We are, indeed, Jesus with skin on.

God comes to meet us today in the person of the Risen Christ. This means that as a person who *needs* Jesus with skin on, I can turn to our faith community to find him. And it also means that I am called to *be* Jesus with skin on for others. This is both a comfort and a challenge!

### *Commentary*

I remember the first time I attended a CYC dance at our parish. There were lots of boys and girls who were 'couples', thus arriving with their own dance partner. I was not one of them. I remember feeling bored and a bit lonely sitting on the sidelines with my dateless girlfriends, watching everyone else dancing and having a good time. And then, out of nowhere, a boy came over and asked me to dance. "Hmmm.....," I thought to myself, "I don't really know this boy too well... but he is kind of cute... and I don't know how to dance much either, but everyone on the dance floor seems to be having such fun..." So knowing that I might end up making a fool out of myself, I gave a nervous 'yes'. That 'yes' changed the course of the entire evening as one dance turned into two, turned into three, and too soon the dance ended and it was time to go home.

The memory of that evening resurfaced as I was reflecting on this chapter "God Comes to Meet Us". I wondered how many times have I sat on the sidelines of life, bored and a bit lonely, maybe even afraid, watching as other people seem to be enjoying life? How many times might God tap me on the shoulder, inviting me to dance? And how many times do I miss the invitation - or worse hear the invitation and not respond?

In the book of Exodus God reveals his name as "I AM" (Ex. 3:14). Not "I WAS" or "I WILL BE", but "I AM".

How telling this is! I AM is right now. I AM is in this very moment. I AM is in the particular everydayness of our lives. The Great I AM comes to meet us every moment of every day in the ordinariness and the extraordinariness of our lives, just as the Great I AM came to meet Noah, Abraham, Moses and so many others throughout history. The Great I AM comes to meet each of us today even more completely than he revealed himself to Abraham and Moses. How? God comes to meet us today most fully and definitively in the person of Jesus Christ (CCC #73). Yes... the Great I AM *comes*, present tense, to us today in the person of the Risen Christ.

I remember the day that I knew without a doubt that this was true. I was sitting at the bedside of our critically ill child, holding my Bible, praying that God would assure me that he was with us. As I prayed I randomly opened the Bible and there at the beginning of the page was this passage from Isaiah:

*Then you shall call and the Lord will answer  
You shall cry for help and He will say: Here I am!*

(Isaiah 58:9)

Immediately I was filled with a profound sense of peace. I knew in the depths of my being that God had come to meet me that day; that he had answered my prayer with the words "Here I am!" And with that certainty, I began to take notice. Everywhere we looked our family found God coming to meet us. We found Christ in the nursing staff who so tenderly cared for our son. We found Christ in the Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist who offered us the Body of Christ at our son's bedside. And of course we found Christ in the Blessed Sacrament they so lovingly carried to us. God came to meet us in the persons of our dear friends who opened their home to us for two weeks, and in the doctors who ministered to his sick body. We met Christ in the many people who called our voicemail to let us know they were praying for us. God came to meet us each night in our own relationship as we shared our feelings in prayer at the end of some very long days.

Yes. I knew then, as I know now, that God most certainly does come to meet us every day - in good times and in bad, for richer or for poorer, in sickness

and in health, when we call out to him, and even surprising us when we don't. All we need to do is open our eyes to see him, open our ears to hear him, open our hearts to receive him.

When God invites us to dance, what will our answer be? This I know for certain: a 'yes' will change everything!

## ***Discussion Questions***

1. Have you ever had an experience when you have known without a doubt that God was present with you? How did it feel? How did you respond?
2. God desires to have an intimate relationship with you. When you think about the most intimate relationship you have now or have had in your life, what does this mean to you?
3. Many times we don't realize the effect we have on other people until we sit back and reflect on it. Can you think of a time when something you said or did made Christ visible for a person in need? How did that feel?

## ***A Prayer***

Lord, I know that there is no higher calling than to be your loving presence in the world. Help me to remember that I can *be* your presence in the everyday situations in which I find myself. Help me also to keep my eyes, my ears and my heart open to *discovering* your presence - in others and in all of the events of my life. Fill me with wonder and awe in your presence! Amen.

## ***About the Author***

Karen lives with her husband Scott in Waterloo, IL. They have four children and three grandchildren. Karen is Pastoral Associate for Adult Faith Formation at her parish, Ss. Peter & Paul Catholic Church in Waterloo. She earned her Graduate Certificate in Spiritual Direction in 2004 and her Master of Divinity Degree from Aquinas Institute of Theology in 2009. Karen and Scott, along with Fr. Tom Griffith, SVD from Boston, are also serving as United States Leadership Team for Worldwide Marriage Encounter.

***May God bless you this week!***