



By Pat Haggerty

As I was heading for a vacation to the coast of New Hampshire, a friend of mine told me I should write a blog about lighthouses. I thought it might be too trite. You know, the beach theme is always focused on starfish, sand dollars and the intricacy of the various shells found scattered on the shoreline. There is nothing wrong with that! People spend hours scanning the beaches for just such memorabilia. However, if anything is still alive, I would hope that item would be thrown back into the sea. Just like the legend of the starfish. A young man was seen throwing star fish into the sea. An old man observed the ritual and asked the young man why he was doing that since there were so many starfish, and he couldn't possibly make a difference. The young man replied, "Made a difference to that one!"

We can find so many thought-provoking reflections at the beach---like the importance of making a difference; the beauty of God's grandeur; the majesty of God's planning through the regularity of the tides. Even lighthouses, which are man-made, can "signal" pause for thought and reflection.

I knew that I had to think about lighthouses, since I had two other reminders of lighthouses. My brother walked into our cottage wearing a t-shirt adorned with a lighthouse that said: "Souls le vent de Saint-Jean-Port-Joli." It was a souvenir from Canada. Another thing is that, as I write this, on the porch of the cottage, there is a banner on the wall with the inscription: "Our Safe Harbor."

I believe that God wants us to use things around us to bring us closer to Him. We come closest to him through the Eucharist, but the Eucharist extends in our daily lives through our interactions with others and through our interactions with God's creations. Even though the

lighthouse is a man-made creation, it reminds us that there is a source of light and direction for travelers on the sea. Some of the most beautiful lighthouses are in Maine. Beginning in 1794, Yankee ingenuity created these towers of light and hope to guide vessels through challenging waters.

What do we use as our lighthouse to guide us through perilous times? Hopefully, it is the Lord. He is our safe harbor whose light is always shining, always present, always at-the-ready to assist us with difficult life passages. We need only turn to him for safe passage and direction.

Ponder the words of the hymn by John Brownlie (1913): “Spirit of light, thy glory pour, and let mine eyes thy radiance see; from sin’s dark night my soul restore, to dwell in light for aye with thee.”

God is our spirit of light, our safe harbor, and our beacon of light. Let us never lose sight of that! Whether you are at the beach, in a chapel, or in your own room, visualize the beacon of light that is God who is ever-present to bring us home. Find consolation and assurance in that image.

Your safe harbor is close at hand!