

By Pat Haggerty

In a previous blog, I told you about one of my favorite spiritual writers, James Behrens, OCSO. There is an essay in his book, *Grace Revisited*, which is particularly moving to me. The essay is called "Andy's Diner." In this vignette, Behrens equates spirituality with the goings-on of the diner. He tells the reader about certain customers who frequented the diner and what they shared with each other. He points out the generosity and openness of the proprietor. He goes so far as to say: "There was something sacramental to it all. Those people gave me something that made me think about and long for the truth and experience of God."

Behrens does not seek to trivialize the sacramental signs around us; he is trying to show us how present they are! Where do we find the truth and experience of God? That truth finds its home in the Eucharist, but the Eucharist extends beyond the liturgy to our everyday lives.

I truly believe that there are signs all around us that help us in this process of believing. Those signs may be found in the people in a diner, in our colleagues at work, in our families---and, yes, even in a marathon. Don't call me crazy! If you have ever watched a marathon, you'll know what I am talking about.

I don't mean watching one on TV (like many folks did with the recent Boston Marathon). I mean being a bystander in the crowd cheering and encouraging the runners. There is something truly moving and cathartic about the experience. You see people pushing themselves to the limit. You see people helping one another by sharing water bottles or encouraging words. You see people barely able to take another step being urged on by the voices and the kind words of the spectators. You see people pushing the physically challenged, and you see people who are physically challenged themselves participating in the wheelchair division.

I am not implying that this is a spiritual exercise---although, for some, one never knows for sure. All I know is that we can take a lesson from those running in a marathon. We can try to emulate their perseverance; we can model their focus; and we can take their lead when it comes to helping others.

Is this a sign of Christ's presence among us? You be the judge.