

# The Hand of God

A missionary bishop was called on to celebrate confirmation for a group of severely handicapped children.

They were all institutionalized, and none of them was capable of even the simplest kind of academic work.

The chaplain of the home warned the bishop not to speak for more than two or three minutes; anything more would be beyond their capability. He was also asked to avoid any highfalutin language.

The bishop was quite nervous about what he would say. He spoke this message to the children:

“Dear Children: Your Mom and Dad and brothers and sisters all love you. That’s why they gently stroke your head and your hair and your cheeks. And that’s what happens when you are confirmed. The Good Lord gently strokes you because He loves you so much. So when I make the sign of the cross on your forehead with the holy oil, our dear Father is stroking and caressing you.”

A few minutes later, as the bishop touched the forehead of a cerebral palsy victim, the little boy’s face grimaced in a little contortion, and – with great difficulty – he said the word “stroke,” while the saliva spilled out of his mouth. His mother gently wiped away the saliva and her tears with the very same handkerchief.

But the boy had gotten the bishop’s message: God was stroking him.

The bishop remarked, “You know, I don’t know what others might think about that theology, but basically this is what God does. God stroked the people of Israel. The father stroked the Prodigal Son. Jesus stroked the children, stroked and caressed the lepers, laid His hand on the eyelids and ears of those who were handicapped and afflicted.”

In brief, the bishop had summed up the message of Christianity in one word: God is love, and we need that love and depend on that love if we are to be whole.

That lesson is clear to the associates of Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home. We become the hand of God as we interact with those entrusted to us.

When we smile and give a hug, when we feed a resident who cannot do so for himself, when we give a bath or comb the hair for a woman who is unable to perform those tasks, then God, through us, is stroking that person, is caressing that individual.

And that is a remarkable demonstration of the Father’s love transferred through us.

– Beecher Hunter