

## **Traveling Companion: An Answer to all my problems**

### **Fr. Michael Tracey**

I found it as soon as I came out from the shopping center. It stood, perched on my windshield, cuddled in the arms of one of the wiper blades. I couldn't miss its yellowness. This 4 inch by 7 ½ piece of paper called for my attention. I noticed other cars in the parking lot supported the same piece of paper.

I looked around to see if anyone was looking. I was alone. My first temptation was to grab the piece of paper and discretely throw it on the ground, while shielding my action with my body. But at that moment, I decided to be civic minded and not litter. I took the piece of paper and cast it on the passenger seat.

Just another advertisement for some sale in the area or maybe some free coupons from a pizza chain, I thought to myself. Having buckled myself in my seat, I cast a wayward eye in the direction of the sheet of paper. A logo of a hand got my attention; then I read it. 'Psychic and Spiritual Readings by Anna.' Being in the business of spiritual reading by the Good Lord, I noticed he had some competition. I read further: "Are you in doubt? (Yes, I noticed the misspelling) Are you unhappy in Love? Marriage? Family? Money? Let Sister Anna help you with all of Life's Problems. Natural and Unnatural." It then listed a telephone number and an address.

I'm not sure if Sister Anna got any business from her advertisement. I'm sure she does not belong to any religious order of women. I'm sure she is not a marriage therapist or a financial advisor or a psychologist but I'm sure that in order to turn my unhappiness into happiness I would have to cover her hand with a financial investment.

I also noticed that psychics appear on TV late at night promising people a panacea of riches, blessings, good fortune and happiness. At least, I don't hear them in the ads telling anyone that they are going to have a heart attack, lose their job, experience a marital breakup, loose a family member in an accident or go broke. It seems to be always upbeat.

We live in a world where we yearn for a quick fix; where we seek out some guru who will furnish us with the inside track, the rest of the story of our lives. We possess so many time saving devices that make us even busier than before. We want simple answers to complex questions. We want to assemble life like we would assemble a new toy that tells us that "some assembly is required" and we try to do it without looking at the instructions. We yearn for the instant that will fill us with the necessary ingredients to use our time saving devices to become more productive in our restlessness, in our boredom, in our wanderings, in our incompleteness.

In the Catholic Church, we have Lent to remind us that there is no quick fix, no simple solution, no easy answer, no simple reading that will answer our deepest desires. Lent reminds us that there is always a detour through the cross in order to get to resurrection.

Of course, I will not be visiting Anna for any psychic or spiritual reading. Instead I may visit the local printer and ask him to print the following flyer: "I Am Who Am wants You!" That title should wet the curiosity appetite. "How's your Love Life? Where's your Marriage? On the Rocks? or Cloud Nine? Where's your Family? Gone Insane? or Pretty Normal? Where's your Money? In the Stock Market? or In the Eternal Futures? We've the answers. Let I Am Who AM help you with Life's Problems. No Office Hours! No Answering Machine! No Busy Signal! Available 24 hours a day. 7 days a week. Now! That's Customer Service with Eternal Bliss. I'll be Waiting!"