

FOCUS – Looking in his eyes

by Amanda Reardon, Captain –

by Captain Amanda Reardon I was in the Los Angeles Airport recently, standing in the security check line, when I noticed the man standing in front of the man in front of me. I was sure he was Richard Dreyfus, the famous actor. As he approached the guard who was checking tickets, I attempted to peer at his ticket, hoping that I'd acquired the superhuman ability to read print one-quarter inch high from 10 feet away.

Of course I couldn't see the ticket, but I might have another chance to discover his identity. After passing the guard, he would need to choose one of two lines for having his carry-on bag screened and walking through the metal detector. He chose the line to the left. The man directly in front of me chose the line to the right. My opportunity had arisen! I moved to the line on the left, and found myself waiting in line just inches from the man in question. I glanced down at the name tag on his bag: "R. Dreyfus."

I'm not the type to stand next to a famous celebrity and not say something. (To tell the truth, I can hardly stand in line next to anyone without saying something.) But I didn't want to make him unhappy by drawing a lot of attention. So, as he leaned over to remove his shoes for inspection, I bent down and quietly said, "Excuse me, sir, are you Richard Dreyfus?" He turned his face toward mine and looked me straight in the eye. "Why, yes, I am," he replied, as a friendly smile spread across his face. After that, I proceeded to make a fool of myself, saying stupid things and asking dumb questions. But I'd had my moment: Richard Dreyfus had looked me in the eye.

If Dreyfus had kept his focus on the shoes he was removing, I could have walked away saying that I talked to a famous movie star. But when he looked in my eyes, he acknowledged my presence. I can say that I had a conversation with him, because we communicated as one person to another. For a moment, I wasn't just a body in the crowd.

A few weeks before this event, it had come to my attention that I often talk to my children without looking at them. I respond to them while cooking or sorting laundry, or diverting my attention to some other task. I have noticed that they are aware that they do not have my full attention unless I am looking at them. They cannot always have my full attention, of course. But I have begun to put other



things aside when possible, and look into their eyes when they talk to me. They know then that I care.

The rich young ruler who approached Jesus in Mark 10 must have known the significance of being looked right in the eyes. Verse 21 says, "Jesus looked at him and loved him." Imagine that look! Imagine the eyes of Christ, filled with love, looking right into your own! I wish I could have stood in that man's shoes. I have frequently daydreamed about what it would be like to have Christ look me in the eyes, or to hear him speak my name. When that day eventually comes, it will be far more exciting than the day Richard Dreyfus looked at me.

As I have been pondering the significance of being looked in the eye, my thoughts keep returning to the simple chorus: "Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in his wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of his glory and grace." We can't physically see the face of Jesus until the day we meet him. And yet, in another sense we are quite capable of turning our eyes upon him. We do this by giving Christ our undivided attention.

The power of being looked in the eye is not really physical. The look is powerful because the person being viewed is the center of attention. Why was I so struck by Dreyfus? Because I was amazed that, for a few brief minutes, I was the focus of his attention. While I cannot see Jesus, I can direct my attention to him. I can concentrate on who he is and what he means to me. As I do, all other things fade from view. In these moments of worship, only he matters.

A brief encounter with a celebrity is fun! But a relationship with the greatest one of all is spectacular. It's amazing that we have the ability to "gaze" upon him every day. The question is: do we do it?