

REFLECTIONS

September 11, 2005

But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid."

Matthew 17:7

I Pray That When...

She came in quietly and took her seat next to us. She seemed a bit uncomfortable since she had not been there before, but she had come on her own. As the service began and we sang the opening hymn, she chose only to listen—and then there was the prayer.

She *felt* the prayer as if it were just for her and she began to weep. Up to that point I was only a quiet observer, impacted only by the emotions she displayed, until—until we passed the pad where the congregation is asked to write their names and give their relationship with the church. We wrote our names noting that we were members. Another couple wrote their names and indicated that they came as regular guests. But Alfreda Johnson wrote only her name for she no longer had a place to call home.

Only two weeks ago Alfreda prepared to receive a deadly storm. Perhaps she felt fear of loss, but probably even her greatest fear couldn't imagine this—displaced with no home to return to; family scattered; friends lost; a way of life completely taken away. She wept and I found myself grieving with her.

It makes me wonder how I would do if placed in a similar situation. I wonder if I would only grieve without venting anger. I wonder if I would have the courage to take the steps to restore life to some kind of meaning. I wonder if I could receive help with such dignity.

All I know is that I was glad I was with her if only to give her a hug.

I pray that when I hugged her she felt Jesus in me; that when I smiled at her she saw Jesus smile through me; that when I shook her hand she felt Jesus' hand grasping hers; that when others gathered around to console her and express their love that she felt Jesus love upon her. I pray that when she remembers this day, it will be remembered as the day when Christ Jesus came and touched her saying, "**Get up. Don't be afraid.**"

"You are the light of the world,"

Richard +