

# Aglow about Glow

Earlier in the summer, I visited Camp GLOW (God Loves our World) for the first time. Camp Glow is a very special summer camp for the young and the young at heart who face developmental disabilities. This camp provides an opportunity for them to be together in a friendly place, to pray together, and to enjoy all kinds of special activities.

The moment I walked into the camp, I sensed that I was in a place of happiness. The counselors created an atmosphere of welcome and the campers greeted me as though they had known me all their lives. As I went from table to table, they told me their names and their favorite camp activities as well as their favorite food and pets.

Before arriving, I had thought and prayed about what I'd say during Mass but, truth to tell, I still wasn't quite sure what the Lord might want me to say on this occasion. I needn't have worried. The minute I began Mass, I knew what to do. I simply asked my very special and wonderful congregation what they liked best about Camp Glow.

One after another they came up to the front of the chapel, mentioning lots of things that were fun, but mostly they told how they liked being with each other. In spite of their challenges, they spoke eloquently and touchingly about their love for Jesus and their love for one another. They were the homilists that day. I was deeply touched and remain so.

I have a brother with developmental disabilities. He's 63 years old and lives in a group home about five miles from my parents. Every Wednesday he comes home for lunch. And almost every week my parents go to visit him. I know firsthand that parents who have children with special needs have a vocation within a vocation. There are constant challenges and not enough places to turn for help, but also hidden joys. Camp Glow is one of the places where the inner beauty of these young people can shine through. And when they shine, their families and loved ones shine too. And no doubt the Lord is very pleased!