

## The hallmark of holiness

Rich Heffern | Aug. 20, 2009 NCR Today

The late Blessed Sacrament Sr. Gloria Davis taught Native American spirituality in the Santa Fe, New Mexico archdiocese for many years. In an interview with her, she told me that her notions about spirituality were first formed as she grew up in her traditional Navajo family.

"I noticed," she said, "that the holy people in our community, the ones we all turned to for spiritual guidance, the ones who conducted the elaborate sings, blessing ceremonies and healing rituals were always the people who had the keenest sense of humor. You could always tell them by the laugh wrinkles around their eyes."

What an idea! The hallmark of holiness here is not a gaunt, hollow-cheeked face or a look of otherworldly serenity, but just a common, garden-variety lively sense of humor. And a sense of humor is chiefly woven of the fabric of life's ups and downs, its absurdities and sorrows, its humdrum everyday, its joys and comic interludes, its tediums, tensions and ironies, its unpredictable encounters and quiet satisfactions.

Meister Eckhart, medieval mystic, said that God is tickled through and through when one of us manages, in the midst of our difficult lives, to show some compassion, do some unrewarded kindness for another. I like that idea of a higher power. So make God smile. Be kind to one another. Make God laugh and laugh in delight. Get a life!

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