

# Heroines along the Way

by Roland Foster

My Dearest and I hop in our Dodge Caravan and take a little drive out to the Pacific Northwest to deliver a large load of "stuff" to our little girl, who is on her own in Portland and planning to marry next year. Going and returning, we see fascinating sights and have wonderful visits with family and friends. After almost 8000 miles, we pull into our own driveway again. Magnificent country! Great trip!

Along the way, during the many days of driving punctuated by rest stops, motel rooms, and restaurant meals, I begin to notice something interesting about a certain category of people. I start to pay close attention, to see if I'm making it up. No, I'm not. It's real.

What I notice is that waitresses in restaurants are, almost without exception, genuinely warm, attentive, helpful, cheerful people. They seem always to have a smile and a friendly greeting. They give prompt service when they can, and they apologize when the kitchen is slow or they get tied up serving other tables or someone goofs, all of which happens sometimes.

As I observe these ladies, I project myself into what I imagine is a common scenario...

*I've got two girls, one in junior high and one about to start second grade. No husband — I had one, but he's gone, and good riddance, I guess. Once in a blue moon he may send a little child support, but I don't hold my breath. I've got a twelve-year-old clunker for a car. It runs, barely, but I can't afford gas to go anywhere anyway. But we have food to eat and clothes on our backs, so we're doing okay.*

*I've been here at this restaurant two years. I worked at a fast food place before that. Thank God for this job. There aren't that many around, especially for someone without a college degree. I don't mind the hours so much, except that I have to pay a lot for day care. Sometimes when business is slack I don't make enough in tips to cover it. Maybe next year Suzie will be old enough to be home alone with her sister in the evenings.*

*The work is hard on my feet and legs — varicose city, if you know what I mean. Hard on my back, too, but that's mainly just a matter of being bone weary when I get home. Next day I'm fine.*

*I like the people. Mostly they're real nice, and they appreciate good service. Once in a while I get a real stinker for a customer, but I just say a little prayer for him or her, and move on. I'm not going to let some sourpuss ruin my day, or make me grouchy with my other customers.*

*The future? I don't know. Mainly I just need to stay healthy until I get my girls raised. I don't worry too much about what happens after that. I don't have the time, the energy, or the answers. I'll let the Lord handle it. I know He can.*

Even though I'm making this up, I'm sure it's not far from the truth for many of the heroic ladies who serve meals to you and me day after day, year after year, throughout this great land. And so I salute the waitresses who so diligently serve and bless their customers. May we customers multiply and return the blessing.