

## Keepers of the Fire

In The Christian Science Monitor newspaper, John Gould tells the story of how his great grandfather saved the Cowing family from freezing to death in a severe winter blizzard. This took place in the State of Maine in the 1700's.

It was a time when there were no matches and fires were generally kept burning the entire winter in the small cabins that were the homes of early farmers. One night during a "down east" blizzard the Cowing family's fire went out. The father had to travel, on foot, two miles to the nearest farm to borrow some fire. Both his life and the lives of his family depended on finding some fire and bringing it home.

After a knock on the door and greetings, Gould writes the following:

"Some cold wood ashes were laid on one leather over-mitten, a red hot maple-wood coal from the hearth was added, the more cold ashes. The coal would ride inactive in the ashes, and could be blown up to kindle a new fire when Mr. Cowing got home... There were no street lights, no highway plows, no nothin', and Mr. Cowing walked home on snowshoes with his hands cupped together before him."

Mr. Cowing made it home and his family didn't freeze.

Reflecting on this story I couldn't help but think that we are all "keepers of the fire." We experience many things in life that are as bad or worse than blizzards. We must pay attention to the fire because our lives depend on it. People often ask each other, "Do you have a light?" That could be a very powerful question if we apply it to the life-giving center of our soul that sometimes is the only thing that can save us in some very difficult situations. Do you have a light? Do you have any fire to give?