

Called to Community

Connecting



Day 2

Job 2:11-13 ... they met together to go and console and comfort

Mark 2:1-12 ... they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay

Acts 28:7-10 ... showed us generous hospitality for three days

Colossians 3:12-17 ... clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony

A community can be one-to-one or a large group, in church or on Zoom, sporting events or workplaces – anywhere people gather. Sometimes it feels uncomfortable connecting with our neighbours who have different beliefs, cultural backgrounds, and political views. Sometimes when we smile or try to engage with others and are rebuffed, our pride is hurt, and we hesitate to open ourselves to community. Should the risk of being rebuffed prevent us from connecting with others? Like the people on the island of Malta welcoming Paul and his companions, we can be blessed by a community of strangers.

Our family experienced this community at the beginning of a family camping trip on Manitoulin Island. Our canoe fell off the top of our camper trailer. A police officer who stopped to help us kindly informed the campground hosts we would be late. On arrival at Providence Bay, campers volunteered to help with setting up our tent-trailer and preparing our dinner. For seven days we were provided with fresh fish and the use of canoes. When a freak rainstorm flooded our camper trailer, a fellow camper offered a key to their home in Sudbury which was on our way home. We refused. It was too generous! Our potential benefactors were undeterred. When we arrived at a Sudbury hotel, a young woman approached us. She said, “I have the key to my parents’ home, and they will NOT take NO for an answer”. We stayed two nights in our wonderful benefactors’ home and every day their daughter surprised us with treats. We became friends and to this day I marvel at the determined generosity, kindness and love we received.

On Manitoulin Island my family were strangers embraced by a camping community who loved, fed, and gave us friendship and a place to stay. Jesus reminds us to love our neighbour as ourselves. By stepping out of our comfort zone and connecting to new communities we are responding to God’s call to us.

G. Austin

For Reflection and Journaling:

1. When have I been embraced by a community? How did I feel?
2. When have I resisted hospitality? What was I thinking?

Meditative Prayer:

*Lord God Almighty, forgive us for not connecting with people who are different from us.
Give us the courage and strength to step out of our comfort zone
and engage with our community. Amen.*