

A Reflection from The Rev. Ben Robertson: June 21, 2023

Every morning begins with a routine. Sometimes this is altered by a pre-surgery pastoral visit or a kid's activity or a failed alarm clock (it was definitely the clock's fault), but the average morning begins in the same way. I am usually the first one to wake up, so I let out the dogs and make the coffee. Then I sit down for prayer, a glance at the news (and further reading if something monumental has happened), and ... my puzzles. The Wordle and a crossword are my current favorites, but others fall in and out of favor (Ellen is a big Sudoku person). These exercises awaken my mind, but what I enjoy the most is sharing the endeavor with friends and family. Several of my in-laws and I, once we are finished with a puzzle, text our results to the group. As our kids grow, they have joined the fray and often "help" mom or dad. Yes, there is a competitive element, but more importantly, there is community and there is connection. The sharing is a daily way of saying, "I see you and I love you."

Community is important. We know this innately and we remembered this during the pandemic. And in a world increasingly divided, we need methods and venues to commune. We may think we are empowered, in control, self-sufficient, "a rock ... an island," etc., but isn't all of that a delusion?

I am reminded of this when someone offers the hackneyed phrase, "I'm spiritual, not religious." I don't want to belittle someone else's spiritual journey. The Church - especially us bafoons up front in the frilly clothes - has done some real damage to many people. But following Christ, when done well, is a communal effort. Jesus called twelve disciples, not one, and many more came along for the ride. Paul wrote mostly to churches, not individuals. When he wrote to the Philippians, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (2:12), that your is second person plural - not one you, but all y'all. In other words, y'all need to get your mess together together.

We do this Jesus thing together because we need each other to do it right. As it says in Proverbs, "iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens the wits of another," (27:17). We can make more difference in the world as a community, and when one of us is grieving or sick or struggling, the community is there to help, and sometimes the community knows we need help before we do. This is why we gather on Sunday, not only to praise God but to lean on each other.

We are not one saint but All Saints. Me time is good and healthy, especially in these relaxed summer months, but us time is better. Community, especially in the midst of difference, can be challenging, but community can also change lives, including our own. I am blessed to be in communion with you, and I pray our community will grow stronger and more connected.

Keep the Faith,

Ben+