

Greetings to those who are willing to listen for the holy whisper,

SCRIPTURE:

Acts 8:29 (NIV) – Larger reading: Acts 8:26-40

“The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

STORY:

When Eugene Debs was imprisoned as a conscientious objector, he became interested in another prisoner who was said to be incorrigible, devoid of a spark of goodness. Since this other prisoner would not speak to anyone, Debs started a campaign of kindness by leaving an orange on the prisoner’s bed and going off without a word. In spite of many rebuffs he gradually penetrated the hard exterior of the man, and the two became fast friends. Years later at the news of Debs’s death the other prisoner, now a useful citizen, made the discerning comment: “He was the only Jesus Christ I ever knew.”

REFLECTION:

The nudge can come unexpectedly, but ever so slightly. A butterfly touch can prick your spirit. A quick passing thought, like billboards on a super highway, can offer a message if we are paying attention. But given the agendas of our complicated and busy lives these multiple messages can be missed and all the while, the Holy Spirit continues to give that nudge, touch our spirit and send messages that a particular person needs to be contacted.

The phone call had come while we were all away ... dad was at work, my two brothers were attending university classes and I was in high school. Mom was alone when she received news that Grandma Mart had passed away. She needed someone to talk to. Grandma’s passing would mean that dad would have to fly back home, but there were some very complicated domestic issues that made this troubling. She just needed someone that she trusted to talk about these issues. As she stood in the living room wondering what to do up the walkway came Pastor Koestline ... “I was just in the neighborhood and thought that I would just pop-in for a visit if that is okay,” he said.

Did God know about the pending phone call when Pastor Koestline was planning his travels that morning? Did God know that mom would need a shoulder to cry on, an ear to listen and wisdom to share? Was the pastor’s visit “just” an accident ... a happenstance ... a chance juxtaposition of person, time and need ... or, was there something else at work within the situation.

A nudge ... a Holy Nudge ... a butterfly touch ... a passing thought ... simple reminders of the Holy Spirit that a letter needs to be written, an e-mail sent, a phone call made, a visit offered ... simple reminders that are all too often dismissed and an opportunity is lost to be about God’s business ... the business of being interconnected with each other ... the business of caring and sharing this journey through life with each other and by

chance, making the burden being carried by another a little lighter ... a little easier to manage ... less painful ... less bothersome.

Who would have thought? Who could have imagined? As God nudged Philip, because Philip was paying attention, maybe God would/could nudge us as well if we would only pay attention. I'm wondering what wonders could be performed by a simple act of thoughtful kindness ... and the Holy Spirit gives that little nudge ... a butterfly touch ... a passing thought ... a simple reminder ... and God's business is performed once again among us, through us and because of us.

QUOTE:

"Mamie Adams always went to a branch post office in her town because the postal employees there were friendly. She went there to buy stamps just before Christmas one year and the lines were particularly long. Someone pointed out that there was no need to wait in line because there was a stamp machine in the lobby. "I know," said Mamie, "but the machine won't ask me about my arthritis." ~ Bits and Pieces

PRAYER:

Gracious God, your Holy Spirit is constantly tapping me on my shoulder and whispering in my ear. Help me to pay attention and do your bidding. Amen.

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim
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