

Homily
6th Sunday after Pentecost
July 1, 2018
Robert Bagioni

Won't you be my neighbor?
Won't you please,
Won't you please?
Please won't you be my neighbor?

You are my friend
You are special
You are my friend
You're special to me.
You are the only one like you.
Like you, my friend, I like you.

Won't You Be My Neighbor and You Are Special

Songs written by Fred Rogers. Host of the Children's TV series "Mr. Rogers Neighborhood". Fred Rogers is also an ordained Presbyterian Minister
*Note his passing and documentary film which we hope to see in adult ed.

Daily readings from The Society of Saint John the Evangelist. A daily devotion I receive each morning.

Companion

When life is hard, what we need most is not always what we want. What we want is for someone or something to come along and make it all go away. But what we need is tenderness. What we need is a companion for the journey. Brother James Koester SSJE

Truth

We all need social groups and their social identities to establish us and fix us in the world we live in. But there is a problem when we find ourselves stuck in that identity-confusing the larger universal truths with either our nation and its interest or our group's mores or social preferences. It is even worse when we limit our vision of the Truth to our particular way of viewing God's nature or our group's preferred ways of praying and worshipping. Br. Robert L'Esperance SSJE

Do you see a connection between the songs of Mr. Rogers and the writings of the monks of the SSJE?

I certainly do. Life is not about “What Is In It For Me”

We need a companion (a friend, a neighbor) in our lives to be there when we need them or to simply be there. To be there to help us with our struggles whether they be monetary, health issues, freedom from oppression or whatever else ails us. To share with us our good times as well as our bad times. To accept us as we are.

God is just that companion that we need. Whether it be Jesus for Christians (who in the Gospel of Mark today heals the ill woman and the child believed to be dead), or God in another form. Maybe even a close friend or possibly a stranger.

As Christians we know that Jesus has called his disciples his friends. He was their companion. Whether they loved him to the end or betrayed him Jesus stood by his friends through trial and tribulation. In good times and in bad. And when Jesus was no longer a physical presence on earth he gave his friends the power to be the companion to all humanity as he was to them.

Today that power has been passed on to us. Like it or not Jesus has commanded us to be the companion and friend of all humanity. Will we use that power to do “What Jesus Would Do”? Will we be there for those who need healing? Will we fight for those being oppressed? Will we accept people as they are not as we want them to be?

If we have truly accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior I believe we will do the right things. As it says in the Epistle 2-Corinthians today “Balance our present abundance with their need” What is your abundance? Is it money? Is it time? Is it a special talent? (examples; collections for holiday meals, Foodshare, healing ministry)

As Mr. Rogers would sing “It’s a beautiful day in this neighborhood” Are you doing your part to ensure that it truly will be a beautiful day for all in our world? “God’s Beautiful Neighborhood”. AMEN