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Christian Perspectives: A Spiritual Director?s report, February 2019

A few years back there was a popular song with a line of lyrics that ran, ?If you can't be with the one you love, love the one you're with.? I don't recall the rest of the song. Those lyrics may actually have implied some kind of infidelity but I choose to think of them in another that has meaning for me.

I have just returned from a vacation in Calgary, Alberta where I visited my daughter and her family. There I was most certainly with the ones I love - my daughter, Jess, her husband, Monty, five-year-old, Reid and seven-month-old Lennon whom I had been longing to hold since last I saw them in October. I caught up on all those missed hugs with my grandsons.

I also visited Christ Church, Elbow Park on two Sundays where I felt warmly welcomed as a visitor and enjoyed the singing offered by their 30 plus SATB choir. I chose Christ Church because the rector is Rev. David Pickett, formerly of St. John's, Ancaster in our diocese.

At Coffee Hour, I had a lovely conversation with a woman who started her high school teaching career in Grey County just north of my parish in Shelburne.

That brings me back to the quote above. Susan was just one of many strangers I met in my travels. I journeyed to Calgary by train. I met many people on the train as the wait staff seated us in different groups for meals. People on the train were mostly eager to meet others and there were many lively and interesting conversations at those meals as well as in the lounge car, the activity car and even in the dark in the raised observation car.

I contemplated the fact that Jesus spent much of his time encountering strangers. We know of some specifically in their stories ? the woman at the well, Nicodemus, the young man lowered through the roof for healing, Jarius and his daughter and all those individuals who came to be healed and received healing in a few moments of time with Jesus. Although Jesus valued his time with his disciples and used it for support and refreshment as well as a teaching time for them, he spent much of his time among strangers. That is when we see Jesus ?loving the one he was with.? He gave each his attention, acceptance and full regard in the moment of contact.

Most of the people I talked with on my journey never learned that I am a priest but naturally, I found myself trying to follow Jesus in the way I listened and affirmed the strangers I met. One man shared his three-year journey of mourning his late wife. Another woman spoke of the cancer she fought and was now enjoying travel. Some spoke of the long years of their working lives ? Saskatchewan farmers, railway workers, former teachers, hydro workers, executives and labourers, operators of a small hotel in Wales. I never saw anyone ask for or receive an email address to keep in touch. This was friendship, love and acceptance in the moment. As Jesus showed us by the parable of the Good Samaritan, loving your neighbor means much more than those close to you geographically or in your circle of family and friends. ?Love the one you're with.

I was sorry to have missed the January meeting but happy to hear we are moving along with the Cursillo survey. Thank you to Anne and James and any others who have begun the process of making lists. I have also been praying that each of us on Secretariat will be able to settle into the various roles we have accepted to be able to move things forward in this new year. I hope to be attending an initial meeting to organize Weekend 55 soon and will also be meeting with Bishop Linda Nicolls along with other representatives of Niagara/Huron Cursillo on March 19 in London. Please pray for good driving weather ? we have had our share of difficult drives this winter so far in Ontario.

De Colores,

Stephanie Pellow

St. Paul's Anglican Church