

+WEEKLY REFLECTION

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Who is waiting for a cold cup of water from me?

Matthew 10:40ff

Having been around churches for most of my life, I have been to quite a few where the welcome has been warm, effusive and genuine.

The people are pleased to see you, to welcome you into their church family, if only for an hour on a Sunday morning. In my own church, there are those who make it their job to make sure no new person isn't offered some company and are encouraged through for the cup of tea at the end.

One couple, have a heart to be there for those who have fled from conflict zones and are seeking asylum with us. They go out of their way to talk, to invite them for meals, to accompany them to local festivals. Above all, they make them feel welcome, in a world that can often feel hostile and cold.

Jesus in this Sunday's gospel gives us a very simple encouragement: 'Whoever welcomes you, welcomes me', and then he gives a practical explanation about offering a cup of cold water to someone who may be thirsty and hot.

It seems so simple that we wonder why it needs to be recorded in narrative of Jesus' ministry. Yet, in my own experience: I know that welcome is never guaranteed. I have been to churches that have stayed silent when I have walked in, who have made it difficult to become part of the community, some have even outright rejected me and sent me on my way.

These experiences have made me enthusiastic to create spaces of welcome, where diverse communities of people are embraced and supported to live their lives fully and in the knowledge that they are loved by God.

Jesus tells us in this reading, welcoming others is an opportunity to welcome Jesus himself. It isn't hard, simple acts of being friendly and hospitable are all that is required. And this Gospel reminds us that no act is too small - each one is seen and valued by God.

So, as we move through this very hot weekend, perhaps we might ask ourselves: who is waiting for a cold cup of water from me?

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