



September 26, 2021

Twenty-Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time

"...Would that all the people of the Lord were prophets! Would that the Lord bestow his spirit on them all!"

Numbers 11:29

Dear Friends;

A small home in Colorado has become a refuge and support center for thousands of immigrants upon their release from detention centers. Sarah Jackson one night found herself thinking, "I was hungry and found myself something to eat. And I was thirsty and was able to get something to drink. But, what about my neighbors who cannot fend for themselves?"

This inspired Sarah to start Casa de Paz, an organization that offers shelter, meals, plane or bus tickets, rides, and emotional support to immigrants released from the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center in Aurora, Colorado. Her mission is "to reunite families separated by immigrant detention, one simple act of love at a time."

Sarah founded Casa de Paz in 2012 after she had traveled to the US-Mexico border. This inspired her to do more. She started by hosting recently released detainees in her small two bedroom apartment across from the detention center. Eventually she raised enough money to rent a bigger house. The new house blends into the suburban neighborhood. The house is decorated with the photos of those who have passed through Casa de Paz. Two bedrooms on the first floor are furnished with bunkbeds and the closets are filled with backpacks and donated supplies. Hundreds of volunteers have helped host three thousand guests from seventy-nine countries reunite with family or find a place to go.

In our first reading from the Book of Numbers Moses is needs assistance in leading and caring for the people of God. So God tells Moses to set aside seventy of the leaders and God would pour out his spirit on them so they can share in the ministry of Moses. Two men who were selected to be part of the group did not make the meeting. Yet the spirit of God also fell upon them and they prophesied just like the others.

Moses' assistant Joshua objects that these two were ministering to the people. He complains that they did not attend the meeting certifying authentic helpers of Moses. Meanwhile this egoism is distracting from the work that needs to be accomplished. Moses responds to Joshua by saying he wished that the spirit would fall on all the people.

In the Gospel the disciples of Jesus see someone performing exorcisms in the name of Jesus. They too complain. Rather than get upset that someone outside the group performs miracles Jesus welcomes their efforts. "If they are not against us they are with us." Rather than focus on the good that is happening Joshua and the disciples become possessive and petty. Both Moses and Jesus will not resort to pettiness but rather want to empower everyone in the work of bringing about the better world of God's Kingdom.

One of the trends I find troublesome about people in the United States is the phenomena of running away rather than remain and make things better. People complain about homelessness, for example, but rather than help look for solutions they will move to where they don't have to look at it.

As Christians we believe that in baptism the Spirit of God is poured out on us. God calls us to work on making the world better for all. Like Sarah Jackson, God relies on us "to think of my neighbors who cannot fend for themselves." We need to partner with government and all different kinds of people and groups to solve the problems we collectively face. There is no time for petty rivalries. And if they are not working against us let us enlist them in working with us.

Peace,

Fr Ron

Esta carta está en español en el sitio web: www.stannechurchbyron.com