

Reaching Out

I was a stranger and you welcomed me. Matthew 25:35

As the world is becoming more globalised and more unequal, life has been changing. In the developed world people are thinking increasingly in terms of “Us” and “Them”: “Us” being those we are close to and comfortable with; “Them” being those who differ in some way such as background, colour, way of life, beliefs. We have become separated, and perhaps wary, suspicious or fearful of “Them”. This is reflected in the spread of bullying and racism, the development of gated housing, and the building of barriers and walls - physical or metaphorical.

The Covid 19 pandemic has given us a window through which to see and realise that separation and isolation are neither natural nor good for anyone. We all need one another. We belong in community. Rather than distancing ourselves from “Them” we need to reach out to them, to learn from them and about them, knowing that they are in fact “Us”. We need to convert hostility into hospitality, so that all of us belong.

*Lord, Father of our human family,
you created all human beings equal in dignity:
Pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit
and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter,
dialogue, justice and peace. Amen.*

(Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*)

A thought: This Pentecost why not try consciously to choose to greet, smile and get to know each person whom we encounter, and enlarge comfort zones, both theirs and ours. According to Karl Rahner “a man always has to take up the challenge of moving beyond himself”.

