

I WAS A STRANGER
AND YOU WELCOMED ME



A hand rules compassion as a hand rules heaven
Gerry Squires
Commissioned for The Gathering Place, St. John's NL
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PERSONAL AND COMMUNAL PRAYER

DARING HOSPITALITY: AS HOSTS

Gathering Hymn: One of your own choosing – a suggestion:
Marty Haugen's *All Are Welcome*

Welcome into the Circle of Prayer:

Come, you that are blessed by my Father,
inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;
for I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,
I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
I was naked and you gave me clothing,
I was sick and you took care of me,
I was in prison and you visited me.

Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me. Matt 25:34-36, 40

Readings:

Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn her seven pillars. She has slaughtered her animals, she has mixed her wine, she has also set her table. She has sent out her servant-girls, she calls from the highest places in the town, "You that are simple, turn in here!" To those without sense she says, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Lay aside immaturity, and live, and walk in the way of insight." Prov 9:1-6

How should one live? Live welcoming to all.
Mechthild of Magdeburg

It is better to relieve a hundred impostors – if there be any such – than to suffer one really distressed person to be sent away empty.

Catherine McAuley

We only love God as much as we love the person we love least.
Dorothy Strang, snc

Real hospitality lies in bending some efforts to change things, to make a haven for the helpless, to be a voice for the voiceless. Hospitality means we take people into the space that is our lives and our minds and our hearts and our work and our efforts. Hospitality is the way we come out of ourselves. It is the first step toward dismantling the barriers of the world. Hospitality is the way we turn a prejudiced world around, one heart at a time.

Joan Chittister, osb

Response: *The Guest House*

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!

Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.

He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice.
meet them at the door laughing and invite them in.

Be grateful for whatever comes.
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

Jelaluddin Rumi

Personal and Shared Reflection: Who are the strangers whom we welcome into our homes, our communities? Who are the strangers whom we find it difficult to welcome? Who are the strangers whom we do not even think about welcoming?

Blessing:

And then all that has divided us will merge
And then compassion
will be wedded to power
And then softness will come to a world that is harsh and unkind
And then both men and women
will be gentle
and then both women and men
will be strong
and then no person will be subject
to another's will
and then all will be rich and free and varied
and then the greed of some will give way
to the needs of many
and then all will share equally
in the earth's abundance
and then all will care for the sick
and the weak and the old
and then all will nourish the young
and then all will cherish life's creatures
and then all will live in harmony
with each other and the earth
and then everywhere will be called Eden
once again.

Judy Chicago, *The Merger Poem*